



3 3433 06826421 1



ZKC  
Bush









# PRIESTHOOD AND CLERGY

UNKNOWN TO CHRISTIANITY ;

OR,

THE CHURCH

A

COMMUNITY OF CO-EQUAL BRETHREN.

---

*A CENTO.*

---

BY CAMPAGINATOR.

---

PHILADELPHIA :

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1857.



---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern  
District of Pennsylvania.

---

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHURCH.

	PAGE.
§ 1. True and False Ideas, . . . . .	7
§ 2. Sects and Denominations, . . . . .	8
§ 3. Historical Development of Synodical or Sectarian Christianity, . . . . .	10
§ 4. The Grand Fallacy, . . . . .	14

## CHAPTER II.

### PRIESTHOOD.

§ 1. Definitions, . . . . .	16
§ 2. Sentiments of the Quakers, . . . . .	20
§ 3. Prerogative of Priesthood common to all Christians, . . . . .	22
§ 4. Why so little said of Church Government in the Scriptures, . . . . .	26
§ 5. The Church Fruits of the Holy Spirit, . . . . .	27
§ 6. What kind of Government recognised in the Acts and the Epistles, . . . . .	29
§ 7. Where we are to look for the Law of Church Government, . . . . .	29
§ 8. What are the Advantages of the Present System? . . . . .	31
§ 9. The Doctrine of a Christian Priesthood apart from the general body of Believers receives no countenance from the earliest History of Christianity, . . . . .	32

## CHAPTER III.

## THE APOSTOLATE.

	PAGE.
§ 1 & 2. Position assumed, and Position denied, . . . .	37

## CHAPTER IV.

## MINISTRY.

§ 1. Prevailing Notions, . . . . .	42
§ 2. The true Idea of Ministry as set forth in the Scriptures, .	43
§ 3. Explication of Scriptural Terms relative to Ministry, .	55
§ 4. Διακονεω, <i>diakoneo</i> , . . . . .	56
§ 5. Διακονια, <i>diakonia</i> , . . . . .	58
§ 6. Διακονος, <i>diakonos</i> , . . . . .	63
§ 7. The Office of Deacon, . . . . .	66
§ 8. Ministry as implied in the term ὑπερητης, <i>hyperetes</i> , .	74
§ 9. Imposition of Hands, . . . . .	75
§ 10. Administering the Sacraments, . . . . .	76
§ 11. Preaching the Gospel, . . . . .	78
§ 12. Ordination, . . . . .	80
§ 13. Ministry in the Church entirely subordinate to Brotherly Love, . . . . .	93
§ 14. Tendency of Clerical Rule, . . . . .	104
§ 15. True Idea of Ministry in the Church, . . . . .	107
§ 16. Who may Proclaim the Gospel? . . . . .	112
§ 17. Does this View infringe the Principles of true Order? .	114
§ 18. Prospective Anticipations, . . . . .	117
§ 19. The Clerical system especially out of place among the Congregationalists, . . . . .	120
§ 20. Evil Effects of the Distinction in Question, . . . .	122

## CHAPTER V.

GENERAL RESULTS, . . . . .	124
APPENDIX, . . . . .	146

READER :

Let us have a fair understanding with each other in the outset.

“Priesthood and Clergy unknown to Christianity” does not imply the denial of a divine Priesthood in Christ, nor of a Spiritual Priesthood as pertaining to all his true people. This we admit of course. Our object is in fact to deny the existence of *any other* Priesthood, in a just view of the Christian economy. We go against all Priesthood and Clergy visibly and externally embodied in a distinct class or caste. Our scope “hath this extent ; no more.”

As to the source or sources whence the materials of the present work have been drawn, it can be of no consequence to the reader to be informed. We have had it simply in view to bring together

1\*



and to weave together, from whatever quarter would yield it, a mass of testimony to the nullity of the distinction between Clergy and Laity. This distinction we regard as of baneful effect upon the interior life of the Church. The results are before the reader. Let him pronounce upon them solely on the ground of their own merits. The anonymous form of publication, with the distinct avowal of non-originality, except in part, will shield the compiler from sinister imputations, while it will give the sentiments advanced access to minds from which they might possibly be excluded by the evil prestige of any name that would assume the responsibility of giving them to the world.

# PRIESTHOOD AND CLERGY,

&c.

---

## CHAPTER I.

---

### THE CHURCH.

#### § 1. *True and False Ideas.*

A SOUND theory of the Church will never be formed so long as the Scriptural usage of the term is not particularly noted. The term "Church" does indeed occur in the Scriptures, as in human discourse, in a generic or universal sense, as embracing the totality of single churches or Christian societies, but not as implying the *organized embodiment* of these societies into one grand ecclesiastical whole. The true idea to be attached to "Church" in this its more general or extended sense is that of the *simple aggregate* of the primary societies or churches of which it is composed. Church, in the specific sense of a single congregation of believers, meeting together in one place, and united in a covenant relation with each for spiritual ends, is the predominant usage. Such churches were formed by the apostles in the early days of Christianity, and to such the apostolic epistles were, for the most part, addressed. They were severally independent of each other as to regime and responsibility, though from community of object, and from the operation of brotherly love, they were of course intimately connected by

spiritual bonds, and might perhaps better be denominated *interdependent* than *independent*. The Holy Spirit, in New Testament diction, addresses them and speaks of them as *churches* established in various places and composed of members walking together in "professed subjection" to the Gospel, and observing the ordinances which the Divine Head of the Church has appointed. To such bodies allusion is had when the sacred writer speaks, for instance, of the "*churches* of Macedonia," the "*churches* of Galatia," the "*churches* of Judea," &c. The churches founded in a particular province are spoken of in the plural, and not in the singular. Still it is unquestionable that the singular or generic term is used in the sense above indicated. Thus it is said of Christ that he was "made head over all things to his *church*." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the *church* and gave himself for it." "In the house of God, which is the *church* of God." And so elsewhere. The original word *ἐκκλησία*, *ecclesia*, uniformly denotes in Scripture either a single society of believers, or the church universal. As to any sense intermediate between these, equivalent to the usage that obtains among Christians when they speak of the Papal Church, of the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, &c., it is utterly unknown to the *usus loquendi* of Holy Writ.

## § 2. *Sects and Denominations.*

"Church," then, in the sense of "denomination," is wholly unknown to the phraseology of Scripture. "Denomination," in fact, is only a veil for the harsher word "sect," though even that is a softened translation of the original. That word is *αἵρεσις*, *hairesis*, *heresy*. Thus,

Acts xxviii. 22. "As concerning this *sect* (*hairesis*), we know that it is every where spoken against."

v. 17. "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the *sect* (*hairesis*) of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation."

xv. 5. "But then rose up certain of the *sect* (*hairesis*) of the Pharisees."

xxiv. 5. "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the *sect* (*hairesis*) of the Nazarenes."

xxvi. 5. "Which knew me from the beginning (if they would testify), that after the most straitest *sect* (*hairesis*) of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."

But we read,

1 Cor. xi. 19. "There must be also *heresies* (*haireseis*) amongst you;" or if we choose, *sects*, or *denominations*, "for one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos" (Cor. iii. 4).

Then again,

Gal. v. 19, 20. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, *heresies* (*haireseis*)."

"Denomination" is a specious word invented by Shame to conceal the nakedness of the fall of Christendom: that which erring and bewildered Christians call *denomination* is in the Scriptures SCHISM, for so it is in the Word: "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no *schisms* (*σχισματα*, *schismata*) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10, and xii. 25), for in the Scriptures believers are represented as being not only one body and one spirit, but as having a dominant unity of mind and judgment; so that whatever we may now say concerning "denominations"—that is, *sects* and *schisms*—and

however these divisions may now be applauded and admired, and however much it may have become a fashionable virtue to speak well of them; yet this is certain, that if there be any truth in the Word of God, every sect is a sin, and every division a proof of disobedience. "THERE IS ONE BODY," is a truth in the divine oracles. The faith once delivered to the saints was mainly to establish this fact, the whole of the New Testament tends to confirm it, and visible Christianity utterly fails to represent the true Christian faith, when this fact is not both in practice and in theory fully acknowledged. We can, at present, only allude to this subject in passing, for it is of itself a theme of wide and serious inquiry, but so much is here said on it, lest any believer, rightly instructed in the word of truth, should be offended with the usage of a word which was originally invented to hide sin. To speak of "various denominations" is, after all, but saying that there are *various heresies* and *schisms*, for Christ and his church have but one name (1 Cor. xii. 12), one body (Eph. v. 29, 30), and one spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17); and therefore to give Christ the name of Roman Catholic, Churchman, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan, Sandemanian, or Quaker, and to admire this many-headed monster as the Church, is as intolerable as to call our Lord by the names of Brama, Vishnu, and Siva, or to look for the body of his disciples among the sects of Athenian philosophy.

### § 3. *Historical Development of Synodical or Sectarian Christianity.*

The original economy of the Church viewed in its primary constituents and its collective import we have thus endeavored to unfold. The separate parts were first developed into being, and these parts, when contemplated in the aggregate, are spoken

of generally as *the church*, but the term, as before remarked, does not imply that the resulting whole is actually *organized* into a collective unity by the conscious act of its members. It is an aggregation existing prior to confederation. But an organized unity, as an historical fact, soon sprung up, and the mode of its origination is thus described by Mosheim in his "Commentary on the Affairs of Christianity before Constantine," (Vol. I. p. 329) :

"Although, therefore, all the churches had, at the commencement of this (the second) century, various laws and institutions in common, which had been received from the apostles themselves, and were particularly careful in maintaining with each other a certain community of tenets, morals, and charity ; yet each individual church which had a bishop and presbyters of its own, assumed to itself the form and rights of a little distinct republic or commonwealth ; and with regard to its internal concerns, was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that, if they did not originate with, had, at least, received the sanction of the people constituting such church. This primitive liberty and independence, however, was by degrees relinquished, and it became a practice for all the minor churches within a province to form themselves into one large association, and to hold at stated seasons, much after the manner of confederate republics, a convention in which the common interests and welfare of the whole were taken into consideration and provided for. Of the immediate authors of this arrangement we are uninformed, but it is certain that it had its origin in Greece ; and there are many things which combine to prove that during this century it did not extend itself beyond the confines of Asia. In process of time, however, the very great advantages attending on a federation of this sort becoming apparent other provinces were induced to follow the example of Greece, and by degrees this form of government became general throughout the whole church ; so that the

Christian community may be said, thenceforward, to have resembled one large commonwealth, made up, like those of Holland and Switzerland, of many minor republics. These conventions or assemblies, in which the delegates from various associated churches consulted on what was requisite to be done for the common welfare of the whole, were termed *Synods* by the Greeks, and by the Latins *Councils*. To the laws enacted by these deputies under the powers with which they were invested by their respective churches, the Greeks gave the name of *canons* or general rules, and by this title it also became usual for them to be distinguished by the Latins."

Here we have very distinctly set before us the *genesis* of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which at an early day established itself in the church. The historian remarks, in a subsequent section, that although this conventional or synodical policy was attended with certain benefits and advantages, yet it was nevertheless "productive of so great an alteration in the general state of the church, as nearly to effect the entire subversion of its ancient constitution." It took from the primary bodies the discussion and adjustment of any but the most petty and trifling concerns, as the general body assumed the prerogative of regulating and determining every thing of importance. In the next place, it went to augment the dignity and authority of the clergy, who soon became to assert themselves as the legitimate successors of the apostles and as charged with an oversight of the individual churches. Add to this, that it tended directly to break in upon and destroy that absolute and perfect equality which had reigned among the teachers of the Christian flocks in the primitive times. "For as it was necessary that some certain place should be fixed on for the seat of council, and that the right of convening the assembly, and presiding therein as moderator as well as of collecting the suffrages and preserving the records of its acts, should be vested in some one or other of its members, it



for the most part became customary to give a preference in these respects to the chief city of the province and its bishop, and hence, in process of time, sprung up the dignity and authority of "metropolitans," a title conferred by way of distinction on the bishops of principal cities. These associations of churches, situated within one and the same province, soon gave rise to the practice of many different provinces associating together; and hence a still greater disparity by degrees introduced itself amongst the bishops. In fine, this custom of holding councils becoming at length universally prevalent, the major part of the church assumed the form of a large civil commonwealth, made up of numerous inferior republics; to the preservation of which order of things, it being found expedient that a chief or superintending prelate should be appointed for each of the three grand divisions of the earth, and that, in addition to this, a supreme power should be lodged in the hands of some one individual bishop; it was tacitly assented to, that a certain degree of ecclesiastical pre-eminence should be recognized as belonging to the bishops of Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria, the principal cities in Asia, Europe, and Africa, and that the bishop of Rome, the noblest and most opulent city in the world, should, moreover, take the precedence amongst these principal bishops, or, as they were afterwards styled, *patriarchs*, and also assume the primacy of the whole Christian church throughout the world." (Vol. I. p. 335.)

This reveals the spiritual pedigree of the Pope. He was gradually generated as the result of the previous process of associating churches into synods, and thence of consolidating synods into larger or ecumenical assemblies. The next and the natural step was to crown the whole structure with a pontifical apex. A pope's tiara will be the inevitable sharpened point of the towering pyramid of ecclesiastical power, when once the independence of single churches is merged in the

plausible but pernicious unity of a Presbytery, Synod, Conference, Convention, or General Assembly. And herein lies

#### § 4. *The Grand Fallacy.*

Church theorizers, impelled by the *vis insita* of the love of dominion, have imposed first upon themselves, and then upon others, the delusive idea, that because the church was distinguished by an internal unity, therefore it was requisite that this unity should be represented by an external one—a grand mistake, and the fruitful source of a thousand mischiefs. The Lord's true church is one, but that oneness grows out of the identity of principles by which the members are governed, and exists independently of local proximity or articles of mutual confederation. It may be difficult for the merely natural man to conceive of such an interior union, without an outward one to represent it, but it ought not to surpass the powers of spiritual perception. Suppose a single church of Christian disciples to exist in the wilds of Siberia, another in the centre of China, another on the pampas of Brazil, another on the sierras of Central America, and another in the vale of Cashmere, so remote from each other that they could never think of coming together and organizing into a larger body, shall we infer from this that they are not really consociated by the influx and operation of a common life and a common love, which is more efficacious to unite than space is to separate? The laws of spiritual affinity break over the barriers of space, and cement in one the hearts of those who never looked each other in the face, or grasped each other by the hand. And this we contend, is the only permanent association or organization which it was designed should obtain in the church on earth. That the primary societies may combine their efforts, that they may organize themselves into voluntary associations for the accomplishment of specific ends, is

not at all denied. But the body resulting in this case is not specifically the church in a larger form, but simply a voluntary society, formed for a certain use, auxiliary to the church, which may be either occasional or permanent, and according as it is the one or the other will the society be fixed or temporary. When the use is accomplished the union should be dissolved, and each separate member fall back upon his individual basis, and there abide. This, we conceive, is the true ideal of the church as a whole—an *unorganized aggregate of the organized unities which compose it*. This aggregate is said to be *visible*, solely because the primary elements—the single societies—of which it is constituted are visible. It is not visible as an organized embodiment, because such an embodiment is not supposed to exist, inasmuch as it is not conformed to genuine divine order. For the same reason we can see how it is that the position, that the Scriptures contain no special system of government of the church as a whole, is well founded. *It is because there is no such thing contemplated in the divine economy as an external church that shall be the subject of such a government*. The very idea represents a nonentity. There is nothing of which ecclesiastical government can properly be predicated but single churches, and the government of these is a very simple affair, as it is nothing else than an application of the ethical precepts of the Word to the social relations of the disciples (Matt. xviii.) But its very simplicity makes against it on the score of its being intelligible. Thousands of honest-minded Christians will be utterly unable to comprehend a system which is devoid of complexity. But such is divine order. The policy of priestcraft has ever been to complicate what is simple, and so to mystify its minions that they should not recognize the light of truth when it appeared. However, the day is destined not only to dawn, but to wax to its noon-tide effulgence, when night's dreary shadows shall all be dispelled.

## CHAPTER II.

## PRIESTHOOD.

§ 1. *Definitions.*

IT will be important to settle *in limine* the meaning that is to be attached to the word "Priest," for the sacerdotal heresy is the strength not only of the Papal apostacy, but of Protestant sectarianism. A priest is a person consecrated to the priestly office, by an order of priests already existing, and supposed, in virtue of this consecration, to be endowed with a character, giving him privileges in divine things above those of his fellow-worshippers who are not consecrated as he is.

In the Levitical institutions, we find the priest greatly exalted in the service of God above the people, because the Levitical order was, till the coming of Christ, a type of the company of the faithful under the High Priest, who was eminently a type of Christ himself: the whole of the worship, the burning of the offerings on the altar, the presenting of every *zebach*\* and *mincha*, of every *korban* and *olah* in the temple, and the performance of every religious ceremony, were the exclusive privilege and duty of "the priests, the sons of Aaron." The most important of the Levite's sacerdotal functions was to make an atonement for the sins of those that came to him, to have their sins removed through his mediation. "And it shall be, when a man shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing, and shall bring his trespass

---

\* *Zebach*, the slaughtered-offering; *Mincha*, the meat-offering of inanimate things offered by fire; *Korban*, an offering generally; *Olah*, a burnt offering.

offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a lamb or a kid for a sin-offering, and *the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin* " (Lev. v.), *and it shall be forgiven him.*" (Ib. iv.)

In the above definition of "a priest," we have stated, that such an one "is a person consecrated to the sacerdotal office, by an order of priests already existing." This is absolutely indispensable to constitute a priesthood ; for if any one takes upon himself that office, without the intervention of the existing corporation, he is either a prophet or an impostor ; a priest ordained by God himself for an especial purpose in the church, or one sent forth by an evil spirit to prophesy lies unto the people. Every true member of the church of Christ, who has received the seal of the Spirit, is a priest in the gospel sense : and if, with that seal, he has received also the gift of teaching, and the church accept his gift, he is a prophet, and may deliver that knowledge which he has received. Paul declares he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by men ;" that is, he was no priest according to the received ideas and ancient custom ; nobody had ordained him ; no son of Aaron had anointed him with oil, and arrayed him in the consecrated ephod ; the corporation of priests were not at all concerned or consulted in his ordination. If he had thought the apostolical succession indispensable in establishing the validity of his office, he might most easily have sought out those archbishops (as the apostles are deemed to have been by some) and have received consecration from their hands ; but he had other views, and what those views were he has stated very plainly : "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia." So he began preaching and teaching without ordination ; and he so

little thought it requisite to be ordained by the apostles, that he purposely avoided it, as is clearly intimated in the epistle to the Galatians.

This, then, is to be "an apostle not of men, neither by men," and is the true apostolical succession, for the honor of which the church of Christ has good reason to be jealous; for if the societies of Christians had been careful to recognize those only as apostolical messengers who had manifested their conversion by their self-denying zeal for their exalted sacerdotal King and Lord, we should not, for fifteen centuries, have been plagued with the plagues of Babylon, nor should we, at this hour, behold the afflicting spectacle of numerous Protestants entangled in the meshes of Rome's pernicious cobweb.

To turn from the spiritual to the carnal priesthood, and to distinguish, by a broad line of demarcation, between "the clergy" and "laity;" to act as if we supposed that a certain and visible order of men had the power of admitting candidates into their body corporate, or that their interference, or even assistance, were indispensable, in opening the door of the ministry to those whom the grace of God had previously selected to teach the truth; is, in fact, to take away from the glory of Him who sends the rod of his strength out of Zion, and who, by the donation of repentance and remission of sins, rules as a Prince in his Israel, and anoints all his true servants to be kings and priests to God and his Father.

As the great labor of the son of perdition has been to destroy the priesthood of grace, and exalt the priesthood of the flesh, and as this his work of wicked witchcraft has too successfully transformed the unity of the believing body into the cloven foot of "clergy and laity," so should it now be the unremitting labor of the servants of the Lord to undo his work; to go back again to the fountain of original purity, and there, in a thorough cleansing of holiness, to recover the fair image of primeval simplicity,

which may induce the bridegroom once more to say to his spouse, "thou art all fair, my love, *there is no spot in thee.*" And for this purpose it behoves us not to tolerate any ancient custom, any received formulary of words, by which it is possible that the understanding of believers may be led, unawares, into a train of thought bordering on the old delusion. We have all an inherent tendency to that delusion: without this tendency, the papacy never could have achieved that omnipotence of dominion which it formerly secured for itself: for, what is the papacy but an accommodation in all things to the desires of the natural man? and what is the anti-papacy, or Christ, but the crucifixion of the desires, and a confutation of the opinions of the natural man? How careful, then, should we be to avoid the paths wherein it is even *possible* to lapse into old errors! How sedulous to follow the new spiritual chart in our journey through the wilderness! How cautious to shun the stumbling-blocks which are thickly set by Satan in every high-road and by-path of the journey! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, *all things* are become new!" His spiritual understanding is new, his religion is new, and he has a new God. With Jehovah, known in Jesus Christ, he comes to see the new privileges of the church, and to acknowledge that these privileges are altogether unlike any thing prevailing elsewhere; a spiritual temple, a spiritual altar, a spiritual high-priest, a spiritual society of priests and prophets chosen by God the Holy Ghost, and by him appointed, anointed, and sent forth, according to his gifts, for any office he chooses; a fraternity of spiritual kings, who shall reign with their God forever; and a spiritual union with the exalted Head of the church, perfect God and perfect man, who is the brother and bridegroom of his church, and who has taught his servants this unspeakable mystery, that they are part of his body, his flesh, and his bones.



Who that acknowledges this creed, can, for one moment, return to the dismal trumpery of the clerical caste, without utter loathing and abomination? Who that understands these things can take up the name of priest or prelate in his mouth without nausea? But alas! we have been so long accustomed to see the sow that was washed return to her wallowing in the mire, that the disgusting spectacle excites neither our surprise nor our displeasure.

Now, in order to recover the privileges of which the church is lawful inheritrix, through the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our duty is to place the gospel ministry in a clear light; to bring it forth in open day; and not to allow it any false effect by shadowy back-grounds, and the picturesque accompaniments of antiquity. If the churches of Rome, of England, or other countries, have *their* Brahminical orders—if they, in perfect consistency with their system, make their priests first breathe the sacerdotal life through the indispensable handling of “prelatical fingers”—if they have their upper and lower houses of Christians, the one called “clergy” and the other “laity”—we cannot be at a loss for the line of conduct which we are to pursue, even to avoid all they have done, not only by ceasing to imitate or tolerate their deeds, but by denouncing them as a delusion, and worse than a delusion.

### § 2. *Sentiments of the Quakers.*

It is but justice to remark in this connection, that one sect, if sect it may be called, has approached perhaps nearer the truth concerning the priesthood than any other, and, entirely leveling every remnant of distinction between clergy and laity, has at last produced a system framed on the fundamental doctrine, that “the old covenant” having “decayed and waxed old,” ought “to vanish away.” This sect is the Quakers; a body of men

who seemed determined to investigate the perplexing question, without the least regard to the trammels of preconceived opinions and settled habits ; and though by such a method of investigation they were in danger of running into some extravagances, they were also sure to discover some truths unknown, denied, or detested by their cotemporaries : for so great are the delusions of every generation, that he who systematically opposes the opinions of the age in which he lives, cannot fail to liberate some truths from the captivity of error, which nothing but a determined war of paradox could have rescued. The Quakers, then, are entitled to the whole credit of placing the sacerdotal controversy in its true light ; and they not only stated the truth, but *acted* on it, and guarded their opinions with such a jealous discipline, that it became impossible for their successors in their society to misunderstand or misinterpret their meaning : to acknowledge a priest in any way, direct or indirect, is, in fact, to cease to be a Quaker. And herein is their wisdom deserving the highest possible eulogies ; for though individuals amongst the Independents have occasionally taught Quaker-doctrine concerning the priesthood, yet no society of Christians, excepting the Quakers, has, *as a society*, acknowledged and acted upon this great maxim, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only Priest that has any pre-eminence, and that the whole body of believers are priests in perfect equality in and through their Head and Lord. One of the early Quakers was, therefore, right when he said, “ we are not persons that have shot up out of the old root into another appearance, as one sect hath done out of another, till many are come up one after another, the ground still remaining out of which they all grow ; but that very ground hath been shaking, destroyed and is destroying, removed and is removing in us.”\*

---

\* Life of William Dewsbury. London, 1836. p. 5.

§ 3. *Prerogative of Priesthood common to all Christians.*

Christianity can never be fully developed, nor can the points of difference between Christ and Anti-Christ ever be fully settled, till the liberty of the ministry to all believers, and the ordination of the Holy Spirit to all the members of the mystical body be fully understood, and freely admitted as valid and sufficient. This is the axe that strikes at the root of the tree of Popery, inexpugnable by any other instrument, but, by this, ultimately to be everted. To deny all distinction between clergy and laity, prohibits, *in limine*, the advance of any other papal argument; neither Pope nor Prelate can plant his feet where this is boldly held forth; it meets him with confutation and expulsion at the door of the sanctuary; and, by referring to the sole priesthood of the divine Head of the Church—who assumes into union with himself all his people, and places them “with boldness and confidence” in “the holiest of all,” as “priests to God and their father”—renders it impossible for any “clergyman” to intrude into the fold of Christ and to usurp functions which his brethren, anointed with the Holy Ghost, may not perform with an authenticity and validity fully equal to any that he can claim.

But it is marvellous to see how this important truth of the gospel has been neglected, and how Christians have, in almost all Protestant denominations, set themselves to the work of consolidating such a form of church government as should reduce the priesthood of the whole body to a naked theory, and make that a mere idea, abstracted from anything practical or tangible, which was intended to be a governing principle of the church upon earth.

The Congregationalists are of all others the most deeply in-

terested in this question, both because they profess to have seceded to the utmost distance from Rome on purely Scriptural grounds, and also to have secured to themselves an ecclesiastical polity free from the evils incident to the systems which elsewhere prevail. Still their practice and their principles seem not to be consistent with each other. Their principles would lead to a plurality of ministers in each church, and we know not that such a plurality has ever been denied, in theory at least, by any respectable writer of the Congregational class. Nevertheless, the great body of Congregationalists have, in practice, rejected the plurality of ministers, and have settled down into the monarchical form of government, without the pretence of an argument in favor of such an arrangement. Here, then, there is a practical breach in their church government; and, here, we might enter upon a logical confutation of their views on this head which we feel well assured could not easily be answered.

We choose, however, to take a higher ground. We do not merely plead for the plurality of ministers, but for the full and free acknowledgment of the liberty of ministry to the whole Church of God, by which all may be placed in that position "that all may prophecy, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) We plead for the abrogation of that law, or, which amounts to the same thing, of that *fixed custom* which commits the whole task of doctrine to a consecrated, to a *clerical* order, which has abolished the mutual exhortations of the church, and substituted, in lieu thereof, the laborious orations of scholastic rhetoricians. We plead for the plenary recognition of the church-privileges of all the people of God; that they may, if so disposed, preach the word (Acts viii. 4); that a saving faith in Christ may be admitted as proof of that anointing, which institutes into the evangelical priesthood—for no one can say that Jesus is his Lord but by the Holy Spirit—and that the rule of the Apostle may be revived and tolerated,

“ We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed and therefore have I spoken, *we also believe and therefore speak.*” If the New Testament is to give us any light in these matters this is plain, that the whole body of believers are, by it, regarded as exercising different ministrations: “ The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; for to one, is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will: for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ: for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. xii.) This eminent passage proves the whole argument: that the Holy Spirit does baptize all believers into the body of Christ; that this union makes them all priests in the sanctuary, by virtue of union with him; and that the Holy Spirit imparts the gifts of ministration, according to the will of God, to each.

Again, it is written, “ Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation: let all things be done unto edifying.” Now, whatever may be said of the miraculous gifts to which there is here an allusion, this is certain, that these passages contemplate the whole church in action, *in ministration*; and it would be the extremity of daring to assert that our modern, or rather popish practice of appropriating the ministry to one salaried individual, however pious, learned, and respectable that individual may be, was known, or even thought of, in the æra when the New Testament was composed under divine influence. Incidental directions are continually occurring in the Scriptures, indicating that

the work of the ministry (*i. e.* the edification of the church by exhortation, experience, doctrine, warning, advice faith, &c.), was with all believers: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10); "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but *exhorting one another.*" (Heb. x. 25.) But whilst remarks like these are of frequent occurrence, there is no record of a fact, nor of any thing like an incidental passing allusion, which can authorize even a resolute partizan to assert that the order existing in these days existed in the days of the apostles.

But here we descend into the arena with the usual arguments advanced for the power, authority, and pre-eminence of the clergyman, whether he be called Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, Minister, Pastor, or Superintendent. Now, as all the parties concerned have substantially, as it relates to the laity, the same cause to defend, it is not matter of surprise to find them all supporting their common theory by precisely the same arguments. There is indeed a wide difference in the extent of power which the different sects require for their clergy; and Rome and Oxford superinduce the aid of tradition to make their case still stronger; but all agree in quoting the same texts for the establishment of the clerical order. These texts, of course, are generally known: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake" (Thess. v. 12, 13); and others of a similar import.

§ 4. *Why so little said of Church Government in the Scriptures.*

In contemplating this question of early church government, we are too apt to bring to it our own ideas and practices as a medium through which to view the subject. Our ideas and practices, unquestionably inherited from Rome, however they may be modified or re-cast, are all applicable to an external work only. The desire of most persons who engage themselves in this inquiry, is to discover the exact degree of authority which the Elders, or Rulers, or Bishops of the church possessed ; to know and define, with precision, all the laws and customs of church polity ; to restore the discipline and recover the canons of ecclesiastical regimen. Writers will tell us that there was only one Bishop, and that he ruled the Priests ; others, that there were no Priests, but many Elders, who were the same as Bishops ; others that there was one Bishop, above the rest, in every church ; others, that the brethren might elect, or might not elect, to clerical offices ; that the Deacons had this or that office, or this or that duty ; and divers other points of that sort, which have been investigated with laborious research, and sustained with contentious controversies of ecclesiastical animosity. But how comes it, if this indeed were the matter of inquiry, that the question is left undefined, uncertain, intangible, in Scripture ? that church government is nowhere clearly described ; that we are constrained to make our discoveries as well as we can, by the very unsatisfactory help of passing allusions or incidental remarks ; and that that which seems to be the very soul of modern division, and the life of all controversy, and the strength of all sects, should have no definite shape in the canon of the New Testament ?

The church government of the Mosaic Law is clear beyond



dispute. There are not, in the Law, only here and there a few detached and questionable allusions, but whole chapters and books expressly on the subject : but in the Gospel, which is a more glorious ministration, which is a better, a clearer, a more lucid, a more life-giving system by far than the Law, the whole question of church government is never once fairly and directly handled ! How shall we account for this ? Simply by this explanation : that our Lord Jesus Christ is the head himself of the church, and that he raises up whom he will by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to edify the church according to his own purpose ; that he never wished his fold to be governed by a code of human laws and a book of canons, but that he did intend at the first, and, to the last, will effect that which he intended at the first, to rule by his Spirit the church which he purchased with his own blood : “ And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart.”

### § 5. *The Church Fruits of the Holy Spirit.*

When the Holy Spirit is imparted, then there will be seen the fruits of it, “ love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ;” and, with such gifts as these, there will be no lack of church order. Oh, yes ! there will be Elders and Teachers ; yea, there will be Bishops ; men of vast power, men of large prerogatives, and of a stringent dominion : their power will be that of love ; they will, with the mitre of meekness, and the pastoral staff of humbleness of mind, and with the knowledge of the deep things of God, and with the strength of prayer, lead the flock to still waters and green pastures, and keep them close under the eye of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. They will sit enthroned in the affections of their faithful brethren ; and, amidst the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, they will rule

with priestly sway. Who doubts it? Who would deny it? Who does not wish it should be so? Dare we not trust the promise of the exalted Head of the church? Are we unable to believe that he will magnify his word above all his name, and that he will, according to his word, be with his people to the end of the world? And are we at all doubtful that, if we come together with one mind and with one spirit, having no other desire than to live and die for the glory of him who died for us, that he will raise up Pastors to take care of us from amongst our anointed number; and that he will elicit all the various gifts of the brethren for the different branches of edification and ministration?

That is very simple in itself which to many persons is a problem of inextricable difficulty. The Head of the church is, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, raising up spiritual men into those offices which are for edification. Wherever there are gifts of teaching in the brethren, there they will, by that same grace by which faith was first imparted, be ultimately made manifest. Every man will stand in his proper position: each will fall into the ranks of the church according to the order for which he is adapted: the grave, the prudent, the watchful, and preceptive character will take his natural place for government; the brother, who has a gift of utterance, and who is well instructed in the Scriptures, will become a teacher; some, by general superiority of understanding, will precede others; and some, by faith and patience, and some, by gift of prayer, will be in that place of trust in the church which is evidently theirs, without any ceremony of election, or imposition of hands. We contend not in the least against the authority of a Minister, when that authority is rightly understood. The true authority is that of the message delivered and of the character of him who delivers it. There is one Spirit which anoints them all into the priesthood, and sanctifies their faculties and calls them forth and demands them according to their grades of value, for the edification of the

church. Caius may have many qualifications for government or for teaching, either conjointly or distinctly, which Lucius has not ; and Caius may be generally regarded, for many reasons, as a leader among the believers ; then, certainly, Caius will become *ἐπίσκοπος*, *episcopos* ; he will be overseer, he will be a ruler : and Lucius, a very dear brother, will take some other station, and be exceedingly valued by the church in his proper capacity. And thus it will come to pass, that, in the kingdom of love, Caius will be a Bishop ! and he will take the oversight of the hearts of the brethren by ruling in their affections ; and his authority will be far greater than if he had received a call out of a college, to preach talented sermons, and, too often, to struggle all his unhappy days with “ Lord-Deacons ” and a discontented flock.

§ 6. *What kind of Government recognized in the Acts and the Epistles.*

To us, it is obvious that the Acts and the Epistles are written with a view of church-government such as this ; a church government, not of any fixed laws or defined polity, but avowedly under the direction of the Holy Spirit, ruling in the principle of love ; which, if it were understood and felt, would effectually settle all disputes about ecclesiastical regime, and show the utter emptiness of all those interminable questions concerning the ministerial office, which have indeed filled many books, but have not advanced even the *external* question one degree further than it was in the days of Luther and Calvin.

§ 7. *Where we are to look for the Law of Church Government.*

The law of church-government is infolded in spiritual principles of general Christian conduct, and not in any canons or

enactments of discipline ; and in texts like these we are to find the mystery : “ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit ; let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Gal. v. 25.) “ Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ : for if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself ; but let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another ; for every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” (Gal. vi. 2-6.) “ Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor.” (Eph. v. 2.) “ Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ ; *submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*” (Eph. v. 19-21.) “ The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also a fellow-Elder : feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being Lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder ; *yea, all of you be subject one to another*, and be clothed with humility.” (2. Pet. v. 1-5.) “ Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye : and, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness : and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body ; and

be ye thankful." (Col. iii. 12-15.) "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Rom. xv. 14.) "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." (Rom. xv. 5-7.)

### § 8. *What are the Advantages of the Present System.*

May we not, then, demand, seeing that the spiritual equality of all believers is not practically recognized, What are the advantages derived from upholding the existing state of things? What benefits result from the pertinacious adherence to the clerical distinction? We may waive the nice question of *the Priest*; but that the clergy and the laity are perfectly distinct amongst the Congregationalists is notorious, and it is quite evident that the laborious education for the ministry, the titular rank of the minister, the call, the ordination, the imposition of hands, the garb, the sole office of instruction, the indelible character, and divers other particularities, constitute the ministers *Clergymen*; and that "the people," as all non-clerical believers are called, are entirely separate in character and action from the clergy. Has this system prospered? Is it, generally speaking, in healthy vigor and activity? Or is it, in the greater number of instances, debile and failing? And is it betraying signs of evident caducity?

§ 9. *The doctrine of a Christian Priesthood apart from the general body of Believers receives no countenance from the earliest History of Christianity.*

On this head we make no pretensions to dive deep into the depths of patristic lore. Indeed, we place very little stress on the historical argument as compared with the Scriptural. It is of mighty small moment to us what the ancientest and the holiest Fathers have taught on a question that is finally to be settled solely on the authority of Holy Writ. If these grave and reverend seigniors are to be summoned into court, it is simply that they may give testimony to matters of fact, and not to take the judges' seat and lay down the law of the church. That we have to seek in the pure archives of Inspiration, and nowhere else. At the same time, if the collateral records of the purest ages of Christianity go to confirm the results of previous inquiry conducted on wholly other grounds, nothing forbids the availing ourselves of this fact, especially with those who would fain worship alike the dry books and the dry bones of these saintly fathers. Happily there is ample evidence that though the apostolic polity was very early departed from, and the foundations of the hierarchy thoroughly laid, yet in the really primo-primitive days of the church the order for which we plead was the one that actually prevailed. The profound and clear-sighted Neander, the honest Mosheim, the exact Gieseler, are accounted reliable authority in this department, and they all concur in substantially the same view of the non-distinction of the clerical and the laical classes in the commencement of the church's career. The following extracts, samples of hundreds similar which might be adduced, will convince the reader that we do no "speak without book" in the averment now made :

"What Moses expressed as a wish, that the Spirit of God

might rest upon all, and all might be prophets, is a prediction of that which was to be realized through Christ. By him was instituted an economy distinguished from the constitution of all previously existing religious societies. There could be no longer a priestly or prophetic office, constituted to serve as a medium for the propagation and development of the Kingdom of God, on which office the religious consciousness of the community was to be dependent. Such a class of priests as existed in the previous systems of religion empowered to guide other men, who remained, as it were, in a state of religious pupillage; having the *exclusive* care of providing for their religious wants, and serving as Mediators, by whom all other men must be placed in connection with God and divine things: such a priestly caste could find no place within Christianity. . . . : When the apostles applied the Old Testament idea of the priesthood, this was done invariably for the simple purpose of showing that no such visible particular priesthood could find place in the new community; that since free access to God and to heaven had been, once for all, open to believers by one High Priest, even Christ, they had by virtue of their union to him, become themselves a spiritual people, consecrated to God, their calling being none other than to dedicate their entire life to God as a thank-offering for the grace of redemption, to publish abroad the power and grace of him who had called them out of the kingdom of darkness into his marvellous light, to make their life one continual priesthood. . . . Each society was a whole composed of equal members, all the members being but organs of the community, as this was the body quickened by the Spirit of Christ. All those members, organs of the whole and of the one Spirit that gave it life, were to co-operate each in his appropriate place, for the common end; and some of the members acted in this organization of parts as the pre-eminently guiding ones. But it could hardly work itself out in a natural way from the essence of the Christian life and of Christian fellowship, that *this guidance should be placed in the hands of only one individual*. The monarchical form of government was not suited to the Christian community of Spirit. The preponderance of one individual at the head of the whole might too easily operate as a check on the free development of the life of the church, and the free co-operation of the different organs, in whom the consciousness

of mutual independence must ever be kept alive. The individual on whom every thing depended, might acquire too great an importance for the whole, and so become a centre round which all would gather, so as to obscure the sense of their common relation to *that only One*, who should be the centre for all.”—*Neander’s Ch. Hist.*, p. 179–183. *Torrey’s Trans.*

“*All Christians*, originally, had the right of pouring out their hearts before the brethren, and of speaking for their edification in the public assemblies.”—*Id.* Vol. I., p. 186.

“The duty of teaching as an office was by no means incumbent on the elders, although the apostle wishes that they should be *apt to teach*. The capacity for instructing and edifying in the assemblies was rather considered as a free gift of the Spirit, which manifested itself in many Christians, though in different modes. *Still less was a distinct priestly order known at this time; for the whole society of Christians formed a royal priesthood, God’s peculiar people.*”—*Gieseler Ecc. Hist.*, ch. ii. § 30. p. 90. *Edin. Ed.*

From the authorities cited by Gieseler we extract the following, which will be seen to bear directly upon the point before us :

“The authority of the church constituted the difference between the (clerical) order and the people. (Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiæ auctoritas).” *Tertul. de Exhort. Castit.* c. 7.

Ambrosiaster (Hilary the Deacon), about A. D. 300, thus speaks in his *Comment ad Ephes* :—“At first all taught and all baptized on whatever days or whatever times it might be convenient. . . . As then the people grew and were multiplied it was a privilege conceded to all at the outset to evangelize, to baptize, and to expound the Scriptures in the church. But as places became filled with churches, conventicles were established and directors appointed, and other offices were created in the churches, so that no one of the number who was not ordained dared to take upon him an office which was not thus entrusted or conceded to him. The consequence was, that the church be-



gan to be governed by entirely a different order and providence, because if all were to be viewed as competent to the same function, it would of course be esteemed irrational, vulgar, and vile. Hence it has happened that now neither do deacons preach among the people, nor do clerics or laics baptize, nor are believers baptized on any and every day, unless it be the sick." — *Gieseler*, Vol. I. p. 91.

So much for fathers and church historians, who simply come in as a kind of volunteer witnesses, though we are very ready to have the case go to the jury without their aid. We make intrinsically but little account of names when the grand question is the true sense of the Word of God, but we are still not indifferent to the suffrages of great and good men. Brown, the earliest of the English Independents (from whom they were originally called *Brownists*) held the liberty of ministry, the equality of Christian brethren, the Spirit's teaching, and competency (and not man's appointment or ordination) as the proper and only warrant for ministry in the present dispensation. Milton also, whose tractates are so often cited against the supporters of establishments, maintains entirely the spiritual priesthood of all true believers, and utterly repudiates the idea of any *order* of men being allowed to come in as *priests*, whatever be their name, between God and his people, to be the medium of intercourse, and the link of their connexion with heaven; maintaining, what the New Testament so emphatically enforces, the personal responsibility of every individual believer to God, and the impossibility of transacting by proxy those matters which relate to God and the soul, and can only be carried on by the aid of the Spirit, through the divine mediation of Jesus at the right hand of God. So far Milton's principles, as an Independent, accord with the principles of the New Testament: and many of his pungent remarks in the tractate entitled "The Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church," deserve the grave and practical attention of the pastors and peo-

ple of all sections of the professing church. We quote a brief passage from the close of it, commending the perusal of the whole to those who would see a clear and forcible exposition of the mischief which has been wrought in the church, by the exhibition of *lures* of any kind, to induce men to take upon themselves a work which they should undertake "willingly, and not by constraint, nor for filthy lucre's sake :"

"Heretofore, in the first evangelic times (and it were happy for Christendom were it so again), ministers of the gospel were by nothing else distinguished from other Christians but by their spiritual knowledge and sanctity of life, for which the Church elected them to be her teachers and overseers, though not thereby to separate them from *whatever calling* she then found them following besides ; as the example of St. Paul declares, and the first times of Christianity. When once they affected to be called a *clergy*, and became, as it were, a distinct order in the commonwealth, bred up for divines in babbling schools, and fed at the public cost, good for nothing else but what was good for nothing, they soon grew idle ; that idleness, with fulness of bread, begat pride and perpetual contention with their feeders, the despised laity, through all ages ever since ; to the perverting of religion and the disturbance of all Christendom ;"—of which "Christendom might soon rid herself and be happy, if Christians would but know their own dignity, their liberty, their adoption ; and let it not be wondered if I say, *their spiritual priesthood*, whereby they have all equally access to any ministerial function, whenever called by their own abilities and the Church, though they never came near commencement or university. But while Protestants, to avoid the due labor of understanding their own religion, are content to lodge it in the breast, or rather in the books of a clergyman, and to take it thence by scraps and mammocks, as he dispenses it in his Sunday's dole ; they will be always learning, and never knowing ; always infants ; always his vassals, as lay-Papists are to their priests ; or at odds with him, as reformed principles give them some light to be not wholly conformable."

---

## CHAPTER III.

## THE APOSTOLATE.

§ 1. *Position assumed.*

“Church Government,” says Prof. Schaaff, in his History of the Apostolic Church, “has its foundation in the Christian Ministry, which is originally identical with the Apostolate and contains the germs of all other church offices.” Such, briefly stated, is the theory which constitutes the stronghold of the advocates of a priestly and clerical caste. It supposes that our Lord in giving his last commandment to the disciples to go forth and proselyte all nations, gave it to them as a kind of corporation, or apostolic college, set apart under a special ecclesiastical organization, instead of giving it to them merely as individuals. Nearly all theologians have interpreted our Saviour’s words in the former sense, implying a special commission to the apostles as an ecclesiastical corporation, and authorising them as such henceforth to preside over the whole body of believers, having power in virtue of that position to expound the doctrines of the Christian faith, to administer the sacraments, and especially to ordain other persons to the performance of the same functions, thus perpetuating the clerical order as long as the church should endure on earth.

§ 2. *Position denied.*

The above statement brings the grand question before us. Is it an undoubted fact that Christ did constitute the apostles an ecclesiastical corporation? The determination of this question

involves the most serious consequences, since all the claims of the clergy as a body of men consecrated by divine appointment to perform certain functions, rest ultimately on the fact whether the apostles themselves were a corporation; for unless they were so constituted they could not convey corporate powers upon those who succeeded them in point of time. Every important passage that is quoted from the New Testament as implying commission, authority, or power to the clergy or ministers of the gospel, has been deduced from words addressed expressly to the apostles. But no one has a right to apply to the clergy at large words spoken by Christ specially to his apostles unless he can also show that the apostles were a corporation, and that as such they communicated the powers or authority which they themselves had received. Were they such a body? Did they communicate such a power? That twelve apostles were in a special manner designated as individuals to COMMENCE the work of proselyting mankind, is evident from the New Testament history, but that they were appointed to this work as an apostolic corporation, with powers to perpetuate this corporate authority by ordination, is a doctrine for which we find no adequate evidence in the Scripture.

In the first place, we have sought in vain for any passage in the New Testament that either speaks of or implies any such corporate action of the apostles as a distinct body. There is no plan for the organization of such a collegiate body laid down in the apostolic writings, nor rules given by which it should be regulated. In warning the disciples against false prophets who would in time appear among them, our Lord gave them no other instruction by which to determine the character of these false teachers but by judging them "according to *their fruits*." He thus left the matter to be determined by the mere inferences of their private judgment, instead of referring them at once to some specific test of truth. The idea of the appointment of

such an apostolic college empowered to teach with a special authority is also opposed by what the Lord says to his disciples Matt. xxiii. 7-10, "*Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called master, for one is your master even Christ.*" Here we have the most positive prohibition on the part of Christ himself against any of his disciples assuming the character of teachers or instructors *by authority*, for that it is only in this sense that the terms are reprobated is evident, since Christ and the apostles distinctly recognize certain of their followers to be teachers and instructors of others. Hence they serve only to teach and instruct by communicating the knowledge they possessed in like manner as any layman in our day instructs any other layman in the principles of religious truth as he has learned them. If none of Christ's disciples were to be saluted with the appellations which signify learned men, teachers, or instructors, can any thing be more evident than that no class of persons could have been constituted by Christ to exercise such functions by a divine commission? Is it possible for words to bear a more direct testimony against a divinely constituted body of teachers than the circumstance, that the very words which imply the necessary superiority of such teachers are positively forbidden to be used?

Secondly. That there could have been no organization of the apostles as a corporation is evident from the statement made by Paul, who expressly tells us (Gal. i. 15, &c.) that after his miraculous call to the apostleship, he held no conference whatever with those who were apostles before him, but went as a mere individual into Arabia on the work of his ministry; and not until three years after did he go up to Jerusalem where he conferred with Peter singly, and merely mentions having seen James only of all the other apostles.

Thirdly. Neither did the other apostles know during these three years, that Christ had appointed Paul an apostle with them, for when he first went up to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26, 27) and "assayed to join himself with the disciples," they were all afraid of him, not believing him to be even a convert to Christianity, till Barnabas cleared up the matter. It seems incredible that the apostles should have been a corporation when, for three years, they did not know so eminent a member of their own body.

Fourthly. It is to be observed that Paul, in the greater number of his epistles, associates with himself, in the address, Timothy, Sylvanus, or Sosthenes, who were his ordinary attendants on his missionary excursions. In other epistles he writes in his own name, and never uses any expression as implying the concurrent authority of an apostolic body. It is the same with Peter, James, and John; they each write as individuals only. These facts are inconsistent with the hypothesis that the apostles constituted a corporation, which was the fountain-head of ministerial authority.

Fifthly. The apostles did not comprehend that they were to preach to the heathen until *ten or eleven years after Christ's ascension*, when Peter was informed of it by a vision. It is moreover evident that they could not have known that the observance of circumcision and the use of clean and unclean food were to be dispensed with, or they would not have held a conference *twenty-two years after the ascension* to determine this matter among themselves. Lastly, it is clear from Acts xxi. 20, &c., that *thirty years after the ascension* the apostles and the whole church at Jerusalem were unaware that the Mosaic institutions had been abrogated by the coming of Christ.

The popular theory, therefore, that the ministerial function was wrapped up in and originated with what is termed the "apostolic college," viewed as a divine corporation, is, we think, totally

irreconcilable with the statements made above. Nor does the filling up of the vacancy occasioned by the defection of Judas in the election of Matthias, as related Acts i. 15-26, invalidate in our minds this conclusion. The election does not appear to have been authorized by the Lord himself, nor was it made by the apostles exclusively, but by the whole body of the disciples; and that, as Macknight and others have suggested, it was presumptuous, may be inferred from the fact, that Christ himself selected Paul for the vacant apostleship by a direct and supernatural appointment. That the election of Matthias could not have been recognized by Christ seems also to be gathered from Rev. xxi. 14, which in describing the city of the celestial Jerusalem states that its foundations bore the names of "the *twelve apostles* of the Lamb." If Paul was included in this enumeration, then certainly Matthias was not, for then there would have been *thirteen apostles*, and if Matthias was included, then by the same reason Paul was not. The same remark is applicable to what is said by our Lord respecting the twelve apostles sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Those who argue that the election of Matthias was legitimate virtually beg the question, as they *assume* that the apostles constituted a corporate body, of which there is no proof in the Scripture.

From the various considerations now adduced we deem the conclusion justified, that Christ called the apostles as mere individuals, and commissioned them to act in this capacity, and in this only. As such they went forth into the world, as it were upon so many different missionary enterprises, wherein each regulated the converts he made by his own views of religious propriety, and not according to any enactments of an apostolical conclave. Consequently the idea of a permanent or perpetuated body of clergy originating from this source becomes a mere ecclesiastical figment.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MINISTRY.

§ 1. *Prevailing Notions.*

THE setting aside of any other *priesthood* in the Christian church than that of our Lord himself still leaves the institution of a *ministry* untouched, and our inquiry now concerns that subject. What then is the general and popular idea of "ministry," and what is the divine teaching concerning it? With the multitude it is a wide undefined term, meaning an office just as undefined, held by one who is termed a priest, clergyman, minister, or preacher. With the uninstructed, "priesthood" and "ministry" are the same thing. Whoever will take trouble to institute the inquiry, will find that the popular idea of "ministry" is like the popular idea of "church"—all dimness and confusion. A notion prevails that whatever is said about priests and Levites in the Old Testament, and about bishops and ministers in the New, is to be applied to the Christian ministry: that a minister is a priest, and a priest a minister; that the person holding this office is in some way to be ordained to it by other priests or ministers; that by virtue of his office he is to preach and pray for the people, to visit the poor and the sick, to look after the salvation of men's souls, and more or less to *secure* it; that he is to be more pious than "the laity;" to wear official apparel; to be called "Reverend," and generally to manage every thing that belongs to "religion."

This is the popular idea of "ministry," with very little variation, among all bodies of Christians; and it obviously is not the interest of the clerical department in any sect to clear up the



popular mistakes on a subject which if rightly understood might tend to subvert all established arrangements, and to restore God's order over the ruins of the order of man.

## § 2. *The true Idea of Ministry as set forth in the Scriptures.*

The first and most obvious duty attached to a ministry by all parties is, of course, *official teaching* ; except, indeed, in the Roman Catholic persuasion, where performing the sacrifice of the mass, and executing "the sacraments," take precedence of preaching and teaching ; but now we are talking of Protestants, and amongst them—in all their sects—teaching and preaching constitute, of necessity, a large portion of ministerial functions. Let us now see what the New Testament says of these functions, their origin, and the persons to whom they are assigned. We find all this stated in 1 Cor. xii. "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord ; there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal ; for to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

This statement is very clear : we are here very plainly informed, that the Holy Spirit gives many gifts to many members of the church ; that the donation is not to a privileged

class, separated from their brethren, nor according to man's appointment or election, but that selection is made out of the whole body, according to the unrestrained will of the sovereign Agent. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal" (v. 7), and that in consequence of this divine regulation, one man receives wisdom, another knowledge, another faith (v. 9); gifts surely requisite for any efficient ministry of teaching. There are, indeed, other gifts mentioned, but with them we are not now concerned, as the church confessedly does not now possess them; but wisdom, knowledge, and faith must, in degree at least, exist, otherwise there would be no ministry of teaching at all. "Now all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, *dividing to every man* severally as he will." (v. 11.)

If this be a true description of the church as it was at the first, then of course it bears no resemblance to the arrangements of the sects, where the division of ministry is not by the will and appointment of the Spirit, but by the direction and choice of man. This is indeed so plain, that almost all commentators seem quietly to yield the point, that ministry in the Corinthian church was of an order now lost, and that all known existing churches have adopted another method. They speak of the Corinthian order as a pattern known only in the Scriptures; it is, in fact, *terra incognita* to them, and so accustomed are they to the systems introduced by tradition, that the distribution of gift by the Spirit to every man in the church, they consider some strange phenomenon of the days of miracles. Amongst the sects we do indeed see quite another order; in the churches of Rome and England, the bishops appoint to the ministry; in the kirk of Scotland, the Presbytery is the fountain of clerical functions; amongst the Dissenters, the people, or the church as it is called, *elect* the minister, and other ministers ordain him after he has been elected; and amongst the Wesleyans, the Conference,

or some power deputed by the Conference, names and governs all the ministers and preachers. Now, it must be clear to every one, that bishops, popular elections, Presbytery, or Conference, are not the Holy Spirit ; and beyond this one need not push the inquiry, in order to be satisfied that all sects, from the stately church of England, down to the lowest denomination of dissent, are gone far astray from the order recorded in the New Testament. If the Scriptures, then, are to be our guide, we have already advanced far in the solution of the problem before us ; and we have only to apply the statements in the New Testament to facts before our eyes, to assure us of the accuracy of our deductions. For instance, let us try the existing church of Rome, by Paul's description of the church of Rome. Paul, in writing to the Romans, says, " We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, for we have different gifts—and there are amongst us prophets, ministers, teachers, exhorters, rulers, helps, showers of mercy, and others." (chap. xii.) But now all that can be said of the church of Rome is, that it is entirely clerical ; that the Spirit does not appoint to ministry, and that everything there is under the supreme control of the Pope. The church of Rome, therefore, has lost the order set forth in the Scriptures ; and so it is with others also ; for we do not find it written, " He gave some bishops to rule dioceses ; or he gave rectors and curates for the ruling of parishes ; or he gave ordained ministers," &c. This is not stated, but something dissimilar in every respect ; the Protestants, therefore, as well as the church of Rome, have departed from the word of God in their arrangements of ministry.

Again : supposing, for argument's sake, that such a form of the church did exist as has been described in the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians—that there was no " ordained " ministry, no clerical or official appointments, no clergy-

men or “ministers” consecrated or chosen to act as functionaries for the people, but that all the people, without any recognition of *official* distinction, met as a gathering of the saints, to receive any “diversity of gifts” which the Spirit might raise up amongst them ; that “wisdom,” “knowledge,” “faith,” were exhibited here and there, without man’s direction, and wholly independent of it : and that the saints so gathered had no idea of any other order : would not such a church resemble a body in active and vigorous life ; every limb, every member, contributing, in proper proportion, to the life and activity of the whole body ? Now this is exactly the similitude selected by the apostle Paul, to describe the church of the Corinthians. “The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing ? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling ? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. *And if they were all one member*, where were the body ? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (1 Cor. xii.)

But let us ask, how can this portion of Scripture apply to the mass of Protestant denominations ? In those divisions of professing Christendom there is no *body* at all, if we are to follow the apostle’s illustration of the life and visibility of the church manifested in the acknowledged life of all the members. The apostle plainly tells us, that “if they were all one member there would be no body ;” and who is there that does not see in these words a condemnation of the clerical system, which presents the body in the form of one member only—THE MINIS-

TER, the ordained, official, and salaried minister, who, whether he be appointed to his office by a prelate or a popular election, supersedes all spiritual gift in the church? In such a system as that, the saints are reduced to silence, the body is dead, all the members are inanimate, the "honorable" or "feeble" are alike useless, and one individual is eye, mouth, ear, hand, and foot. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee." This is the illustration of the apostle; but applying this illustration to the customs of the sects, we see that with them one member says, "I will be eye, hand, head, and foot: entrust all your functions to me, ye separate members, for I will be the life of the whole body." This is a figurative description of *the fact* presented to us by the ministry of the one man system, and in such a system the supremacy of the Spirit cannot be owned, nor can his distribution of gift "to every man according to his own will" have any place. Every thing that the apostle says on that subject is inapplicable to a church government based on an ordained ministry.

It is just possible that a person to whom these truths were new might seek to evade the force of them by contending that "life" may be and is in the members of a Protestant church as it is ordinarily constituted, and that no one can be a believer without this life, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and recognized as such by the evidences of saving faith; it is not, however, of that life of which the apostle is speaking in this chapter; he does indeed lay down as a fundamental truth, that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (ver. 3); but taking that as an acknowledged first principle in the church, and presuming that every believer does call Jesus Lord by the Holy Ghost, he goes on to show how in addition to that spiritual life of the regenerate there is given to them another power for the purpose of manifesting their corporate

energy, which power is the distribution of gifts for ministry by the Holy Ghost : where there is that distribution, or at any rate where it is acknowledged, then, he says, every member is in proper place, and then it is that one member does not usurp the functions of all the rest.

Again, Paul says, "The body is not one member, but many." (ver. 14.) Now, the sects practically, though unintentionally, deny this ; and they ought, in keeping with their practices, to read the text thus : "The body *is* one member, and *not* many," for such is the outward figure of the body which they exhibit. But the apostle proceeds thus : "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles ? are all prophets ? are all teachers ?" &c. This is a full explanation of all he had previously urged, the proof of the life of the body is by the operations of the members, the operation is by the gifts distributed ; all the members have not all these gifts, but all are in a condition to receive any which the Spirit may impart ; some may have one gift, some more, some none : teaching, helping, governing, may be separated or united, just as the Lord chooses ; but not one word of this could be understood if we were to suppose that one or two individuals acted officially and permanently in lieu of the whole body of believers. Suppose, only for argument's sake, that there was a ministry in the apostle's days, such as we see in these times, then would it be impossible to comprehend Paul's meaning ; but if on the other hand we dismiss the idea of a clerical order, and admit the truth that the whole body of believers met for such ministry as the Spirit might please to apportion to them, dividing to every man severally as he chose, then we can understand all the argument of the apostle.

In the fourteenth chapter of the same epistle, Paul incidentally lets us know the result of the church-order as it existed in the days of obedience. (Ver. 23-31), "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. . . . Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. *For ye may all prophesy one by one*, that all may learn and all may be comforted." The meaning of this passage is evident: Paul supposes it to be possible that in the meetings of the churches *all* the believers might be so injudicious as to use one gift which would be intelligible only to themselves, but wholly unintelligible to "the unlearned or unbelievers." (ver. 23.) This possible mistake he corrects by recommending that only two or three should speak in an unknown tongue, but at the same time he mentions, with manifest approbation, the possible fact of *all* prophesying, nay, he plainly says, that "all might prophesy one by one, that all might learn, and all be comforted;" and whilst he says this, he never alludes to the existence of any official pastor, ordained minister, or clergymen in the Corinthian church; his thoughts never go that way at all; he does not, as is the custom now, address his remarks as a matter of course to "the minister," meaning thereby either the parish priest or the popularly-elected preacher, but he obviously directs his precepts to the whole Corinthian church as the min-

istering body. He expects that gifts should be visible in *the body*, the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, faith, teaching, help, government, evangelizing, and the rest; and he expects that the appointment to those gifts must be by the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit by which, as he tells us in introducing the subject, every believer has been enabled to say that Jesus is the Lord. (1 Cor. xii. 3.) And indeed it is well worthy of observation that Paul, in writing to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Thessalonians, Philippians, and Colossians, never directs his letters to "the minister," he never even names such an individual; and this fact alone, if duly weighed, would go far to settle the question of an "ordained ministry," wherever there is a disposition implicitly to believe and obey the word of God.

In concluding the precepts concerning church-order to the Corinthians, Paul says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto THEM to speak." (xiv. 34.) Now, it would have been impossible for Paul to have written this sentence if he had been acquainted with the phenomenon of a regular ordained ministry; for taking his words either as they stand by themselves, or in connection with the preceding matter, it is quite apparent that he supposes all the men in the Corinthian church *might* speak if they had received the gift, not that it was incumbent on them all so to do, but that any one was permitted if he had the gift. Women were the precluded class: *there* the line was drawn. Silence is enjoined to them, and to them only, and this most abundantly proves that the whole church, with the exception of the women, was deemed in those days to be in a capacity "to teach all and to comfort all.\*"

---

\* "The Apostle Paul interdicts the female part of the church alone from publicly speaking in the assemblies; which makes it evident that no other exception existed to the universality of this right among the Christians."—*Neander*.



Are we then to follow the Scriptures in these matters? Are we to test "churches," as they are called, by the precepts and arrangements which we find in the Scriptures? If so, let us test "the churches" by these sayings, and let us see how with any intelligible meaning, the following words could be addressed to the meetings assembled for worship whether in church or chapel:—"Brethren, when ye come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a doctrine: to one is given wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith; some of you are evangelists, some teachers, some pastors, some rulers, some helps; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing *to every one of you* severally as he will; for the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every one* to profit withal; but let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak. As *every man* hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if *any man* speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if *any man* minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."

Here is a language of hieroglyphs to the sects; it relates to facts of which they have no cognizance, and to an order of things of which they have lost all remembrance; and yet this is the language and these the records of the New Testament.

There are, however, two other chapters in the New Testament in which the subject is fully stated. To the Romans Paul writes, "Through the grace given unto me, I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according

to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering : or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation ; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." (xii.) Here Paul enumerates some of the gifts : prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, showing mercy ; now whatever may be our opinion about the accurate meaning of all these gifts enumerated, this is certain, that ministry, exhortation, teaching and ruling—four offices, which in these days are always assigned to one person, and which are always deemed to be the peculiar prerogatives or duties of " the minister"—are declared by Paul to be gifts " differing according to the grace received," and distributable amongst many or all the members of the church, but by no means to one " minister " or clergyman. Moreover, Paul's precepts and admonitions cannot the least be understood without perceiving this, for his remarks are to this effect : " Do not any of you in the church which is sojourning in Rome be elated with your gifts ; for if you have any gift, ministry, teaching, exhortation, prophecy, or power of government, understand that it is a donation of grace, a manifestation of the Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will. You are but members of one body ; the members have each their proper office assigned to them, and when each member performs its functions, the whole body is in harmonious and healthy vitality."

This being the same subject as that which Paul handles in his epistle to the Corinthians, it is interesting to notice that on both occasions he enforces his thoughts by a similar illustration—that the subject, as it were of necessity, leads him to refer to the body and the members for an intelligible and convincing similitude. Again, in his epistle to the Ephesians, we find the same statements : " There is one body, and one Spirit. . . . But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of

the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . . And he gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; . . . . and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, . . . . that we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (iv. 4-16.)

In this portion then of the Scripture we have again the same subject and the same illustration—the Spirit divides to all as he chooses—or the church is in a capacity to receive any gifts—any believer may help in service in the church, or perhaps all may help. This is the body, and this the case of the members. Moreover, it deserves particular attention that "the growing up into the perfect man," and "the increase of the body," is presumed by Paul to be both possible and probable *when God's order prevails*. He brings forward these things to show the end and object of such an arrangement ; if, therefore, we find professing Christians deliberately rejecting God's order, and setting up a ministry of the flesh instead, can we be surprised if there is not visible amongst them any "growing up into a perfect man," and that "the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love," is a mystery with which they are practically unacquainted ?

And now, then, compare all this doctrine of Scripture with the practices every where prevalent. In these days we hear clergymen asserting that they hold an office which makes them a class distinct from the body of believers ; that they by their

ordination have the exclusive prerogative of evangelist, pastor, teacher, and ruler amongst the saints, and that "the laity" cannot, without great irregularity, nay, not without sin, interfere in functions set apart for the clerical order. In church and chapel we hear this either openly asserted or tacitly implied, according to the degree of clerical feeling which prevails with those who hold ecclesiastical office ; but wherever we see a clerical order do we not at the same time see a practical contradiction of the scriptural constitution of ministry ? How can a ministry of the flesh agree with a ministry distributed by the Spirit ? How can an ordained clerical *caste* comport with the free exercise of gift acknowledged in the whole body of believers ? We must, therefore, come to no other conclusion than that "the churches" of our days do not represent the *divine* order in their ministerial appointments. The origin and history of this great perversion we need not now examine ; of the fact of a perversion—of an apostasy—there can be no doubt at all in the minds of those who are resolved to be guided in this inquiry by the Scriptures rather than by tradition.

Here then is a formidable array of Scripture authority to establish the truths for which we plead : but what is the usual reply to so much and such serious evidence ? Generally, an exclamation of amazement that we can propound anything so strange as that there is "no ministry, and no ordination to ministry in the New Testament !" It behoves us therefore to be still more explicit, that we may show both what Scripture does and does not teach on the subject—that we may prove our point both negatively and positively. Here, then, let it be remembered, that we are not to be deceived by the use of words diverted from their proper meaning, and conveying with them the ideas of tradition and not of the Scriptures ; for there is "ministry" in the New Testament, and abundantly set forth too there, far more abundantly than we are, for the most part, pre-

pared to receive ; but it has no reference to the idea of ministry handed down to us by tradition : it is therefore important again to state the traditional, before we further make manifest the scriptural idea. The ministry of professing Christendom, then, has a reference to a body of men set apart by the sacerdotal ceremony from the body of believers, and ordained into an office in which they have exclusive right to preach, teach, feed, and tend the flock, and “administer the sacraments.” We have then further to inquire if the ministry of scripture answers to this traditionary representation of it.

### § 3. *Explication of Scriptural Terms relative to Ministry.*

In the New Testament “ministry,” except when predicated of Christ himself, Rom. xv. 8, Matt. xx. 28, Heb. viii. 6, is used to denote *any service of the saints to God and to his Church*, though in our English translation the meaning of the term is occasionally weakened or perverted. The English word “ministry” occurs in the New Testament eighteen times, in all which instances, except two, it is a translation of the Greek word *διακονια*, *diakonia*. In the following passages *ministry* is given as the translation of *leitourgia*, *leitourgia*, otherwise rendered *service* :—“But now hath he obtained a more excellent *ministry* (*leitourgia*), by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant.” (Heb. viii. 6.) “Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the *ministry* (*leitourgia*).” (ix. 21.) These two instances are the only exceptions. There are, however, several instances in which *διακονια*, *diakonia*, is translated by some other word than “ministry ;” and this fact may at once enable us to understand how much confusion of thought may be introduced by a capricious translation, influenced by clerical notions. But in order to present the whole

subject in its clearest light it will doubtless be expedient to array before the reader the entire list of passages where the original terms for *to minister, ministry, &c.*, occur in the New Testament, as the actual usage will evince that nearly all the advantage gained by the clerical theory is due to a subtle process of *technicalizing* terms which were intended to bear no other than their ordinary import. This process has been somewhat largely applied by ecclesiastical and other dignitaries in the interpretation of holy writ, but in no case perhaps more glaringly than in regard to the words which we are now about to consider.

#### § 4. διακονεω, *diakoneo*.

The verb διακονεω, *diakoneo*, *to serve, to minister*, occurs thirty-seven times, in twenty-three of which it is rendered by *minister*, in ten by *serve*, in two by *administer*, and in two by *using the office of a deacon*.

Matt. iv. 11. "Angels came and *ministered unto* (*diekonoun*) him."

Matt. viii. 15. "She arose and *ministered unto* (*diekonei*) them."

Matt. xx. 28. "Even as the Son of Man came not *to be ministered unto* (*diakonethenai*), but *to minister* (*diakonesai*), and give his life," &c. So also Mark x. 45.

Matt. xxv. 44. "When saw we thee in prison and did not *minister unto* (*diekonesamen*) thee?"

Matt. xxvii. 55. "And many women were there, which followed Jesus from Galilee, *ministering unto* (*diakonousai*) him."

Mark i. 13. "And the angels *ministered unto* (*diekonoun*) him."

" 31. "The fever left her and she *ministered unto* (*diekonei*) them." Luke iv. 39.

Mark xv. 41. "Who also followed him and *ministered unto* (*diekonoun*) him."

- Luke viii. 3. "And many others which *ministered unto* (*diekonoun*) him of their substance."
- Luke x. 40. "My sister hath left me *to serve* (*diakonein*) alone."
- "xii. 37. "And will come forth and *serve* (*diakonesei*) them."
- Luke xvii. 8. "Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and *serve* (*diakonei*) me."
- Luke xxii. 26. "He that is chief, as he that *doth serve* (*diakonōn*)."
- Luke xxii. 27. "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he *that serveth* (*diakonōn*)."
- Luke xxii. 27. "I am among you as he *that serveth* (*diakonōn*)."
- John xii. 2. "There they made him a supper, and Martha *served* (*diekonei*)."
- John xii. 26. "If any man *serve* (*diakonē*) me, let him follow me."
- John xii. 26. "If any man *serve* (*diakonē*) me, him will my Father honor."
- Acts vi. 2. "It is not reason that we should have the Word of God and *serve* (*diakonein*) tables."
- Acts xix. 22. "Two of them that *ministered unto* (*diekonoun*) him."
- Rom. xv. 25. "But now I go unto Jerusalem *to minister* (*diakonōn*) unto the saints."
- 2 Cor. iii. 3. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, *ministered* (*diakonetheisa*) by us."
- 2 Cor. viii. 19. "To travel with us with this grace, *which is administered* (*diakonoumena*) by us to the glory of the same Lord."
- 2 Cor. viii. 19. "*Which is administered* (*diakonoumena*) by us."
- 1 Tim. iii. 10. "Let them first be proved; then *let them use the office of a deacon* (*diakoneitosan*), being found blameless."

1 Tim. iii. 13. "For they that have *used the office of a deacon* (*diakonesantes*), will," &c.

In the two preceding texts a new phase will be seen to be given to the rendering of the original word. Influenced perhaps by the sound our translators have turned the term into the "exercise of the deacon's office," which they could readily do where it would especially suit their purpose. But upon the *deaconship* we shall dwell more at length on a subsequent page.

2 Tim. i. 18. "And in how many things he *ministered unto* (*diēkonēsen*) me at Ephesus."

Phil. 13. "That in thy stead he *might have ministered unto me* (*diakonē*) in the bonds of the Gospel."

Heb. vi. 10. "In that ye *have ministered unto* (*diakonsantes*) the saints and *do minister* (*diakonountes*)."

1 Pet. i. 12. "That unto us they *did minister* (*diekonoun*) the things which are now reported," &c.

1 Pet. iv. 10. "Even so *minister* (*diakonountes*) the same one to another;" i. e. be mutually *serviceable* one to another.

This text implies not only a general liberty of ministry, but according to the management of the translators in other passages, might be made to represent all believers as "ministers," which indeed *is* the meaning of the text when ministry is rightly understood; but it is not a ministry of "Gospel preaching."

1 Pet. iv. 11. "If any man *minister* (*diakonei*) let him do it," &c.

### § 5. διακονία, *diakonia*.

Luke x. 40. "But Martha was cumbered about much *serving* (*diakonia*)."

Acts i. 17. "Had obtained part of this *ministry* (*diakonia*)."



Acts i. 25. "That he may take part of this *ministry* (*diakonia*)."

Ministry here is *service*, service to God and his church, not a clerical or episcopal office, as it is to be feared the translators wished the readers to understand it, if we may judge by their unwarrantable rendering of the word "bishoprick" in the 20th verse of that chapter.

Acts vi. 1. "Were neglected in the daily *ministration* (*diakonia*)."

Acts vi. 4. "May give ourselves to prayer and to the *ministry* (*diakonia*) of the Word."

In the general *service* to be rendered by all the members to the church, that of expounding and applying the Scriptures doubtless devolved more especially upon the apostles. So at the present day, those whose attainments and tastes lead them in that direction are thereby called to the discharge of the same function, not upon ceremonial but upon moral grounds.

Acts xi. 29. "Then the disciples determined to send *relief* (*diakonia*) unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea."

Acts xii. 25. "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their *ministry* (*diakonia*)," i. e. had *administered the relief* spoken of in the preceding passage.

Acts xx. 24. "So that I might finish my course with joy, and the *ministry* (*diakonia*) which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

This was the general *service* to which Paul was called, and every man who has an experimental knowledge of the gospel is called also to "testify" of that gospel to his fellow-men, though the circumstances of his *ministry* or *service* may not be the same with those of Paul.

Acts xxi. 19. "And when he had saluted them, he declared

particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his *ministry* (*diakonia*)," i. e. by his *instrumental service*.

Rom. xi. 13. "Inasmuch as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine *office* (*diakonia*)," i. e. my service.

Rom. xii. 7. "Or *ministry* (*diakonia*), let us wait on our *ministering* (*diakonia*) ; or he that teacheth, on teaching."

Whatever is here implied by *ministry*, *ministering*, it is evidently something not precisely identical with *teaching*, as they are clearly distinguished. With the popular ideas of the *ministry*, this distinction would not be apt to have been made.

Rom. xv. 31. "That my *service* (*diakonia*) which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ;" i. e. the *contribution* of which I am made the bearer.

1 Cor. xii. 7. "And there are differences of *administrations* (*diakonion*), but the same Lord."

1 Cor. xvi. 15. "And that they have addicted themselves to the *ministry* (*diakonia*) of the saints ; i. e. to the *service* of the saints."

2 Cor. iii. 7. "If the *ministration* (*diakonia*) of death, written," &c.

2 Cor. iii. 8. "How shall not the *ministration* (*diakonia*) of the Spirit be much more glorious ?"

2 Cor. iii. 9. "For if the *ministration* (*diakonia*) of condemnation be glory, much more doth the *ministration* (*diakonia*) of righteousness exceed in glory."

*Ministration* or *ministry* as used in this connection seems to be equivalent to *economy* or *dispensation*.

2 Cor. iv. 1. "Therefore seeing we have obtained this *ministry* (*diakonia*), as we have obtained mercy, we faint not ;" i. e. seeing we are called to act in connection with the *general system of service* before spoken of.

2 Cor. v. 18. "And hath given to us the *ministry* (*diakonia*) of reconciliation."

- 2 Cor. vi. 3. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the *ministry* (*diakonia*) be not blamed.
- 2 Cor. viii. 4. "Praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of *ministering* (*diakonia*) to the saints;" i. e. affording them relief.
- 2 Cor. ix. 1. "Touching the *ministering* (*diakonia*) to the saints;" i. e. as above, ministering to their temporal wants.
- 2 Cor. ix. 12. "For the *administration of this service* (*diakonias leitourgias tautes*) not only supplieth the wants of the saints," &c.
- 2 Cor. ix. 13. "While by the experiment of this *ministration* (*diakonia*) they glorify God."
- 2 Cor. xi. 8. "I robbed other churches taking wages of them *to do you service* (*diakonia*)," lit. for *ministering to you*.
- Eph. iv. 11, 12. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the *ministry* (*diakonia*), for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Prior to a close inspection of this passage in the original we were not aware how far short the present rendering comes of exhibiting the true sense of the sacred writer. That rendering, it will be observed, presents three distinct clauses, divided by commas, embracing what the English reader would take to be three separate, but closely related, uses to be accomplished by the divine donation of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers" to the church—the first, "the perfecting of the saints," the second, "the work of the ministry," the third, "the edifying of the body of Christ." This, however, is not sustained by the original. In no edition with which we have met of the Greek text is there a comma inserted between the first and second clauses. Moreover, the preposition "for" before "perfecting" is not the same with that before "work of the ministry," and before "edifying the body." In the one case it is

προς, *pros*, and in the other, εἰς, *eis*. In view then of the punctuation and the phrasing of the original, no other rendering is legitimate than the following, or one equivalent to it: "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ." The original for "of the ministry" is simply διακονίας, *diakonias*, of *ministry*, without the article, and not τῆς διακονίας, of *the ministry*, with the article. What more obvious than that the ministry here spoken of is a ministry pertaining to *all* the saints, and not the technical or clerical ministry which has been so generally understood by it? Christ gave these various officers to the church for the express purpose of better qualifying all his saints to perform that *service* or *ministry* which should help to build up the whole body into the fullness and completeness of the divine life.

Col. iv. 17. "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the *ministry* (*diakonia*) which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

Had *diakonia* been here translated "service" it would have far more faithfully expressed the meaning of the original, and would at the same time have put the extinguisher on many a bright flash of pulpit eloquence, which this text has elicited, when it suited the preachers to deliver orations on the "ministerial office." Archippus had been known as one *in service* to the Lord and to his people; what that service was, we cannot now say, but it does not at all appear that it was preaching the Gospel, or the exercise of the pastoral office. Archippus might have had no gift for teaching or preaching; he might have had no gift for government. What his gift was it is impossible for us now to determine; only this is apparent, that the service for which he was known, he had "received in the Lord;" but such is the force of the customary notions, that his "ministry" is generally supposed to have been an official pastorate, so that

ministers of the establishment claim Archippus as one of their clergy, while others, with equal confidence, tell us that he was a minister of a congregational church.

1 Tim. i. 12. "For that he accounted me faithful, putting me into the *ministry* (*eis diakonian*);" lit. *appointing me to service*, the article being wanting in the original.

2. Tim. iv. 5. "Make full proof of thy *ministry* (*diakonia*);" lit. *fulfil thy service*.

By "ministry" here is to be understood not the clerical function, but the whole *service* of Timothy's redeemed life, as purchased by a price to be a servant of Christ his Lord. What sort of service that is, we may learn by reference to the words of Paul respecting himself: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." This is the *diakonia* which is so often in his thoughts and so much upon his pen. Any service and all service is "ministry" in the New Testament diction.

2 Tim. iv. 11. "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the *ministry* (*eis diakonian*);" lit. he is profitable to me *unto service*, i. e. to serving or ministering to my necessities.

Heb. i. 14. "Are they not all ministering (*leitourgika*) spirits sent forth to *minister* (*eis diakonian*) for them that shall be heirs of salvation?" lit. sent forth *for service*.

Rev. ii. 19. "I know thy works, and charity, and *service* (*diakonia*)."

### § 6. διακονος, *diakonos*.

Matt. xx. 26. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *minister* (*diakonos*)."  
Comp. Mark x. 43.

Matt. xxii. 13. "Then said the king to the *servants* (*diakonois*), Bind him hand and foot."

Matt. xxiii. 11. "He that is greatest among you shall be your *servant* (*diakonos*)."

Mark ix. 35. "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and *servant* (*diakonos*) of all."

John ii. 5. "His mother saith unto the *servants* (*diakonoi*)."

John ii. ix. "But the *servants* (*diakonoi*) which drew the water knew."

John xii. 26. "Where I am, there shall also my *servant* (*diakonos*) be."

Rom. xiii. 4. "For he is the *minister* (*diakonos*) of God to thee for good." This is spoken of the civil magistrate.

Rom. xiii. 4. "For he is the *minister* (*diakonos*) of God, a revenger," &c.

Rom. xv. 8. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a *minister* (*diakonos*) of the circumcision for the truth of God."

Rom. xvi. 1. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a *servant* (*diakonos*) of the church which is at Cenchrea."

1 Cor. iii. 5. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but *ministers* (*diakonoi*) by whom ye believed?"

2 Cor. iii. 6. "Who hath also made us able *ministers* (*diakonous*) of the New Testament."

2 Cor. vi. 4. "But in all things approving ourselves as *ministers* (*diakonoi*) of God;" i. e. as *servants*.

2 Cor. xi. 15. "It is no great thing if his *ministers* (*diakonoi*) also be transformed as the *ministers* of righteousness;" i. e. his *servants*.

2 Cor. xi. 23. "Are they *ministers* (*diakonoi*) of Christ? I am more."

Gal. ii. 17. "Is therefore Christ the *minister* (*diakonos*) of sin?"

Eph. iii. 7. "Whereof I was made a *minister* (*diakonos*) according to the gift," &c.

Eph. vi. 21. "But that ye also may know my affairs, and how

I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful *minister* (*diakonos*) in the Lord shall make known."

Phil. i. 1. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and *deacons* (*diakonois*)."

Col. i. 7. "As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant who is for you a faithful *minister* (*diakonos*) of Christ." Comp. ch. iv. 7.

Col. i. 23. "Whereof I Paul am made a *minister* (*diakonos*)."  
So also v. 25.

1 Thes. iii. 2. "And sent Timotheus, our brother and *minister* (*diakonos*) of God."

1 Tim. iii. 8. "Likewise must the *deacons* (*diakonous*) be grave," &c.

1 Tim. iii. 12. "Let the *deacons* (*diakonoi*) be the husbands of one wife."

1 Tim. iv. 6. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good *minister* (*diakonos*) of Jesus Christ."

These are very important instances of the usage of the word, as it is in fact a description of all Christ's deacons, ministers, or servants. Any one that serves Christ is his *diakonos*. "Jesus Christ was a *diakonos* of the circumcision for the truth of God." (Rom. xv. 8.) "I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea." Even Bloomfield, who seldom fails, wherever an opportunity occurs, to give a high church interpretation, says upon Rom. xii. 6, "The words *diakonos*, *diakonein*, and *diakonia*, though general terms and used of the apostles themselves, are often, in the New Testament, used of some certain *specific* office undertaken in the cause of the Christian church, and exercised by those Christians who did not so much employ themselves in *explaining the doctrines* of the Gospel, as in *managing the external and temporal affairs* of the church and of individuals." This is a creditable

concession from a member of that church which so emphatically teaches that *deacon* (*diakonos*) is the title of one of the orders of the teaching priesthood. But it is one of the accumulated and irresistible testimonies that the general import of the term, in all its branches, is *service*—*service* of whatever kind—is brought which into requisition in building up the Lord's church on earth. But upon the usage of this term and of the office of *deacon* we shall have more to say shortly.

In view of the ample array of passages now adduced is not the conclusion fair and unimpeachable that "*minister*" *never, in one single instance in the New Testament, means a clerical functionary; that "ministry" has the meaning of service in every instance where it is expressive of the actions of Christians; and that it frequently refers to the service of all the saints to one another.* This is our firm and unshaken conviction, and consequently we hold that the entire clerical system which has so long obtained in the Christian church has been, as we have before remarked, the result of a process of *technicalizing* the import of certain terms which were designed to be taken in their more native, ordinary, or every-day sense. It is easy to see how the operation of certain inbred principles in our fallen nature should have led, by the aid of pliant translations, to the conversion, for instance, of the original word for *servant* into that of *minister* as implying ecclesiastical rule, and of the simple word *overseer* to that of *bishop*, and so of a multitude of others, that have been made the ground-work of a pernicious system of hierarchy.

### § 7. *The office of Deacon.*

But in order to make the general subject yet plainer we must clear up some mistakes that have accumulated round the word *διακονος*, and which, in the English Bible, appears as "*minister*," "*servant*," or "*deacon*," as it suited the object of the transla-



tors to render it. Let it then be remembered that the translators had a double task to perform, not only to give an English version of the Scriptures, but so to manage that version as not to disturb the ecclesiastical order of their own communion. That this necessary caution was part of their task, we know by historical record; for King James expressly commanded them not to change "the old ecclesiastical words;" and in their preface, attached to the larger Bibles, they thus express themselves: "We have avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old ecclesiastical words and betake themselves to others." The effect of this caution is most conspicuous in their management of the words "bishop, overseer, deacon, minister, church," &c., &c.; but at present we have to investigate their management of the words "ministry, minister, service, servant, deacon;" a management which with them was almost a necessity, as in the preface "to the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests and deacons," published in the larger prayer-books, we find this to be the first sentence, "It is evident unto all men, *diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors*, that, from the apostles' time, there have been these *orders of ministers* in Christ's church; bishops, priests, and deacons." Here is an appeal to Scripture, together with "ancient authors," for the validity of the three orders of the Established Church: we may, therefore, conjecture how tenderly the clerical translators would handle the text, when it presented difficulties in the way of their ecclesiastical system.

*Diakonos*, *διακονος*, a word employed thirty times in the New Testament, has never once in the original the technical and official meaning of either a deacon or a minister. The *diakonos* of the New Testament is a person who in any way is serving God, when the word is used in reference to the Church of God: in two instances it is applied to express an ordinary domestic

servant. "His mother said unto *the servants—the servants* which drew the water." (John ii. 5, 9.) In Rom. xiii. 4, the ruler or magistrate is called "*a servant of God to the church for good.*"

The passages now adduced will be sufficient to show that the *diakonos* of the Greek text is a word generally expressive of *service*, and that to translate it *deacon* or *minister* in one passage, whilst in another it is rendered *servant*, is not to represent the true meaning of the original, but rather the ecclesiastical prejudices of the translator. And, in fact, the word "deacon," and "the office of deacon," though making a conspicuous figure in the English Bible, have no existence in the original. This we shall soon establish. The origin of the deacon's office is generally traced to the transaction recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the whole church at Jerusalem, by the advice of the apostles, selected seven men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" to superintend the service of the tables, and to silence the murmurings of some, who thought that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." The church chose seven holy men for this duty; and when they were chosen, the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them. But no mention is here made that these persons were called deacons; nor in any other place of the New Testament is this asserted: and we may be certain, that if this were indeed the origination of the deacon's office, the office must have ceased even before the death of some of the apostles; for as it had reference to peculiar local circumstances, namely, the common table of the saints at Jerusalem, and as we see no such peculiar circumstances in any of the other churches, so must it have ceased when the necessity ceased to which it owed its existence. This is discoverable by a close attention to the text, which from the original is to be thus read—"Look out among you seven men of honest report, whom we will appoint for this *necessity.*" In the

English Bible we read it "this business," but the word is *χρεία*, *chreia*, which though it occurs upwards of forty times in the New Testament, is in every instance but this uniformly rendered "need" or "necessity." Now the difference in the translation is important; let it stand "over this business," and it leaves a general impression that "the deacons" were appointed to take care of the poor in the church, but translate it correctly, "for this necessity" and then it appears that it was a peculiar exigency—that the service of the common table at Jerusalem required peculiar attention and care; and that for that necessity, and in order to prevent a spirit of discontent arising amongst the multitude of believers, they thought it expedient to choose seven approved brethren, to whose wisdom and grace they might leave all the arrangement and ordering of a very onerous duty.

There are, indeed, some who, perceiving that the Seven were appointed for a peculiar purpose, and that consequently their special duties must have ceased with the special circumstances which called them forth, nevertheless contend that the general duty of distribution may well be attributed to the Seven, and that where the general duty existed any where also, we may *conjecture* that an office similar to that of the Seven would be created elsewhere. But to this we reply, that allowing "distribution" to be, as it certainly is, a permanent duty in the church, requiring much grace, yet it is wholly begging the question to "conjecture" that "deacons" were appointed "distributors" in other churches, or even in the church at Jerusalem; on the contrary, the proof is all the other way, that "the general duty of distribution" was not considered the special province of the Seven, for in Acts xi. 29, 30, we are told that "the disciples at Antioch, every man according to his ability, determined to send *relief* (or *service*, *diakonian*) unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the *Elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." . . . "And Barnabas and Saul

returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their *service* (*diakonian*).” (xii. 25.) Now the collection here made (and doubtless that also referred to in Rom. xv. 26), was not sent to the Seven, the supposed distributors or bursars-general of the church, but *to the elders*; and it is moreover apparent from Acts xv. 2, 22, 23, that the elders are distinct from the apostles; from which we conclude that the service of tables was the ministry of the Seven, but that the general ministry of distribution fell rather within the province of the elders.

In what other place then in the New Testament shall we find “the deacon” and his “office?” In Paul’s Epistle to Timothy, our translators have given it a being: “the deacons must be grave;” let “the deacons be the husbands of one wife” (1 Tim. iii.); and still more conspicuously, “let them be proved, and then *let them use the office of a deacon*, being found blameless.” (ver. 10.) But, as in the first instances, “the deacon” should be “the servant,” or, if you will, “the minister,” taking care that no *clerical* meaning is attached to the word; so in this instance “the office of a deacon” is wholly imaginary: in the original it is, “let them *serve*, or *be in service* (διακονεῖτωσαν).” Again, verse 13, “They that have used *the office of a deacon* well purchased to themselves a good degree,” read thus, “They that have *served well* (οἱ καλῶς διακονήσαντες) secure to themselves a good step.” So that the only passage in the New Testament where we find “the office of a deacon,” wholly fails to support it; and the two pompous nouns substantive “the office of a deacon,” when examined by the original, turn out to be phantoms of the translators, introduced into the text to take the place of a verb expressing quite another thought!

But this may be put still clearer, for a few verses further on the translators have indeed found the word *diakonos*; but there they boldly give it a new meaning, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good *minister*

of Jesus Christ." (iv. 6.) Why then is the word in this verse not translated "deacon," when it had twice before been so presented to us? Apparently for this reason, that as Timothy is, by the Episcopalians, pronounced to be "Bishop of Ephesus" (yea, by some of them declared "Primate of all Asia")—his prelatie dignities would have disappeared if he had been called a "deacon" by the apostle Paul. We see then that the *deacon* is an arbitrary creation of ecclesiastical prejudice; that the original word means simply any servant of the Lord for the church; and that the translators introduce or keep back the official "deacon" as it happens to suit their purpose. If "they who serve well" (1 Tim. iii. 13), are "deacons," then assuredly was Timothy himself a deacon (iv. 16); but if he was not a deacon, but only a servant of the Lord in the church, then "they who served well" were not official deacons, but servants of the Lord in the church as was also Timothy. In 1 Thess. iii. 2, Timothy is again mentioned as *diakonos*.

We need not, after this, tarry long to pass judgment on the mistakes of the traditional school on this subject. In the Church of England, in the ordination of deacons the bishop is made to say, that "it appertaineth to the office of a deacon to assist the priest in divine service, specially when he ministereth the holy communion; to read the Scriptures and Homilies in the church, to teach children the church catechism, to baptize infants, *in the absence of the priest*, to preach, if licensed so to do by the bishop, and to point out the poor and sick of the parish to the curate, in order that the curate may exhort his parishioners to relieve them!" And all this we are gravely told is the office of the deacon, as appointed by the apostles, and recorded in the sixth chapter of Acts!

Congregationalists, who can discern clearly enough the errors of the Episcopalians on this question, have nevertheless themselves gone all astray in their endeavors to realize "the deacon's

office." They are not indeed agreed amongst themselves whether "the deacon's office" is to be traced to the sixth chapter of Acts; but they pretty generally affirm that the care of the poor is the proper duty of this officer. "I affirm," says the author of the *Church Member's Guide*, "that the table of the poor is the deacon's appropriate and exclusive duty. Whatever is conjoined with this is *extra-diakonal* service, and vested in the individual merely for the sake of utility."—(*Church Member's Guide*, p. 130.) "Utility" then has with them virtually changed the office; for the same writer further says, "*all* the temporal affairs of the church should be confided to the deacons; their accounts ought to be annually laid before the *subscribing* members of the church, and to receive their approbation"—"the deacons, from their being officers in the church, . . . will be considered by every wise and prudent *minister* as his privy council in *his* spiritual government, and should always be ready to afford him, in a modest, respectful, and unobtrusive manner, their advice."

This last sentence could scarcely be put into Scripture language; for in making the attempt we should thus read it: "The *diakonoî*, from their being officers in the church, . . . will be considered by every wise and prudent *diakonos*, &c." Tradition has separated the deacon and the minister, but in the New Testament they are one and the same word; and indeed so fully does *diakonia* mean any service in the church, that it is used in the Scripture as a synonyme also for "the office of a bishop," as the English translators have fallaciously rendered ἐπισκοπή. Compare Acts i. 17 with verse 20 of the same chapter.

By this examination of Scripture we are now coming to daylight where much darkness had been allowed to settle, and we are beginning to ascertain that "ministry" is all manner of service in the spiritual government of the church of God; that "ministers" and "deacons" are simply servants; and that any

believer, man or woman, who serves the Lord and his people, is a deacon or minister.

Paul was, in this sense, a deacon, minister, or servant (2 Cor. xi. 23 ; Eph. iii. 7 ; Col. i. 23.) Timothy, in this sense, was a deacon. (1 Thess. iii. 2 ; 1 Tim. iv. 6.) Phebe was a deacon. (Rom. xvi. 1.) Apollos was a deacon. (1 Cor. iii. 5.) Tychicus was a deacon. (Eph. vi. 21.) All those who were in service to the Lord in the church at Philippi were deacons. (Phil. i. 1.) And indeed if we may imitate the translators of the English Bible, and coin "the deacon's office" out of the verb *diakoneo*, then "all believers that have received the gift are to exercise the deacon's office one to another ;" and Paul tells us there are diversities of deacon's offices (1 Cor. xii. 5) ; and finally, in this mode of translating the Scriptures, our Lord himself has promised that where he is there also shall his deacons be. (John xii. 26.)

How then can we resist the conclusion that the "deacon," as a permanent officer of the Christian church, is a mere traditional figment? A candid examination of the first epistle to Timothy ought surely to settle the question ; for there, not only do we find that "the office of the deacon" is plainly a coinage of the translators, but that Timothy himself is called *deacon*, if the translators would be true to their own interpretation. It is wholly impossible to render *diakonos*, in chap. iii. 12, by the word "deacon," when a few verses further on it is presented to us as "minister." (iv. 6.) This is not interpreting but tampering with the Scriptures. There is in the Greek one word for "deacon," "minister," "servant," &c. ; that one word is *diakonos* : let, then, any one word that the inquirer may be pleased to select be taken as a translation of that one word,—let that one translation be uniformly adhered to in every instance where the word *diakonos* appears in the original, and then, by this fair and simple process, the phantom of tradition

will forthwith disappear. They that doubt should make the experiment.

§ 8. *Ministry as implied in the term ὑπέρτης, huperetēs.*

“Ministry,” however, makes its appearance in the English Bible through the medium of another word, which must not be overlooked. That word is ὑπέρτης, *huperetees*, and in four instances it is so translated as to carry with it a clerical meaning, when the Scriptures are studied under the influence of traditional prejudices. Ὑπέρτης, *huperetees*, is, in its primary meaning, an under-rower, one who sat in the rower’s bench of the ancient trireme-vessels, under the command of a superior officer; but in its secondary sense it is any inferior officer, chiefly of the civil courts, the apparitor, sergeant, or constable; also any servant, official or domestic, state-servants or house-servants; and lastly, any one who renders service in any matter or duty.

In the Gospels the word is frequently translated “officer” or “servant.” Thus :

Matt. v. 25. “Lest the judge deliver thee to the *officer* (*huperetē*).”

Mark xiv. 54. “Peter followed him even unto the palace of the high priest, and he sat *with the servants* (*meta tōn huperetōn*).”

In the following instances, however, we find it rendered *minister* :

Luke i. 2. “Who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and *ministers of the word* (*huperetai tou logou*);” equivalent, according to Kuinoel, to *agents of the affairs recorded*.

Acts xiii. 5. “And they had John to their *minister* (*huperetēn*);” i. e. assistant in service.



Acts xxvi. 16. "I have appeared unto thee to make thee a *minister* (*huperetēn*, *servant*) and witness."

1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man so account of us as of the *ministers* (*huperetas*, *servants*) of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

This latter text is probably often read, though unconsciously, as one of the *clerical* passages of the New Testament; yet when closely examined and compared with others, it appears of rather an opposite tendency. We do indeed often hear the clergy tell us that they are "stewards of mysteries" and "ministers of Christ;" but here the minister is simply the servant, and we must not forget that Peter gives the stewardship to all believers, "as every man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good *stewards* of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet. iv. 10.) Dr. Arnold in his "Miscellanies," p. 22, 23, has shown that "mysteries" here are the mysteries or profound truths of the kingdom, and not the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as frequently understood.

### § 9. *Imposition of Hands.*

We have now then only to examine the last strong-hold of clerical prejudice, the imposition of hands, a subject which to many persons is a mystery, containing in it the whole order of the clergy and all its accompaniments: so great indeed is the influence of this ceremony on the minds of many, that they consider the whole question of the sacerdotal order clearly established by a simple reference to the instances of imposition of hands recorded in the New Testament; and it must be confessed that the Papists, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Independents,\* and the Wesleyans, are in wonderful accord

---

\* In formal words the Independents do not allow that they create a

on this subject; *imposition of hands creating a clerical order*, they all discover in the Scriptures; only they cannot agree amongst themselves who are the true clergy, and in which of the sects the ceremony is most accurately performed.

But granting that there is any truth in that which has been already argued, then it must be obvious that the "ministry" of the New Testament differs so widely from any existing ministerial order that we need not be very solicitous, after the preceding exhibition, to inquire about "a regular ministry, ordained by imposition of hands;" for unless the advocates of the clerical order can succeed in setting aside these statements from the New Testament, then is their system virtually undermined. But let us, nevertheless, for argument's sake, waive any preceding proofs, and very briefly examine *the popular* notions of "an ordained ministry." Now, according to popular notions, the regular minister has been ordained "to preach the Gospel, and administer the sacraments," by virtue of imposition of hands of a clerical body already existing. Let us advert to both these points in detail.

### § 10. *Administering the Sacraments.*

1st. As to "administering the sacraments" the term is wholly unknown in scripture. There are no "sacraments" in the New Testament: it is only from the papal school that we hear of them. The churches of Rome and England talk much of "the

---

clerical order; but all their practices and their habitual language most clearly show that they *think* they have a clergy; their ministers are called clergymen, and always claim the title of Reverend. They distinguish also very accurately between "the secular" and "the spiritual" officers of their churches—the deacon's office they tell us is *secular*, and the minister's is *spiritual*. If, however, "showing mercy" to the poor and miserable be a part of "the deacon's office," than assuredly is "showing mercy" reckoned as one of the distinct gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. xii. 8.)

sacraments ;” and the dissenters, copying those churches, or rather retaining the practices which they received originally from Rome through the church of England, enlarge on the mysterious theme ; but the Christian who is guided by the Scriptures need not trouble himself about any theological language which he cannot find in the word of God. As for baptism, which they call one of the sacraments, there is no scripture proof that it was performed by any “minister,” taking the word even in the wide sense of *diakonos*—the baptism of the converts in the house of Cornelius was not performed by any “minister,” for as far as we are informed, the only “minister” present was Peter, and “he *commanded* them to be baptized” (Acts x. 48) ; that is, he did not baptize them himself ; and though doubtless the traditional school would assure us that “the certain brethren from Joppa” who accompanied Peter (verse 23) were clergymen, and “administered the sacrament of baptism” on that occasion, yet no such statement appears in Scripture ; and therefore it may be dismissed with innumerable other dreams of the school. Neither is there any evidence that the presence of a minister, or an elder, or a bishop, was considered indispensable in those meetings of the saints when on the first day of the week they assembled to break bread. Paul gives many directions to the Corinthians concerning those meetings ; but he never once names or even alludes to any elder, bishop, or ordained minister, as likely to be present on those occasions. If there were elders in the church of Corinth, they would of course break bread with the rest, but so little did Paul know about “ordained ministers administering the sacrament” that he neither names the minister nor the sacrament ; and how this omission can be accounted for, if in those days there were either “ordained ministers” or sacraments, we see not. Let those who can, explain this difficulty.

The ecclesiastical phraseology of “administering the sacra-

ment of the Lord's supper " is in vain sought for in the New Testament : the Lord's Supper is thus described there, " On the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread." (Acts xx. 7.) And this simple statement, made if possible still more simple by Paul's allusions to the mode of meeting in the Corinthian church (see 1 Cor. xi. 20-34), ought to be sufficient to dissipate all our visions about ceremonies and clergymen in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The truth is this : on the first day of the week the brethren met together to break bread ; and if in those meetings ministers, that is *diakoni*, were present, or if elders were of the number, they would take the bread and the wine amongst the rest, but the sacrament and the clergymen had not then been invented. In the second century of church-history, they begin to make their appearance.

### § 11. *Preaching the Gospel.*

Then, secondly, as to " preaching the Gospel," no such faculty was conveyed by any imposition of hands or any ordination ; for if that had been the case, then of course no other door to preaching the Gospel could have been opened, as the simultaneous existence of ordained and unordained preachers would have made it appear that ordination, for preaching the Gospel at least, was a ceremony that might be dispensed with. Now to the existence of unordained preachers we have a direct testimony : " Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison, therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4.) Was this an irregular and uncanonical proceeding ? Of course all clergymen are bound to declare that it was, because these preachers had not received " holy orders ;" but the Scriptures here, as in all other ecclesiastical questions, disagree with the clergy, for it is written further, " Now they

which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Antioch, preaching the word. *And the hand of the Lord was with them : and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.*" (xi. 19-21.)

Now if this had been irregular, not only would the inspired writer have marked it with disapprobation, but the then existing church would assuredly have corrected the practice, and laid down some canon against "lay preaching:" but not so; for the "tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church: . . . and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch: who, when he came, and *had seen the grace of God, was glad*, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord." (verse 22-24.)

This narrative, if duly weighed, incurably ruins the whole fabric of "a regular ministry ordained to preach the Gospel;" for it brings us to acknowledge this point, that the churches of the apostacy will not tolerate those practices in which the saints of the apostolical era greatly rejoiced, and which drew forth the commendation and thankfulness of "good men who were full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Would the Church of England, in similar circumstances, send forth its "lay members" to preach the Gospel? Did it do so in the time of the Commonwealth, when the hand of power bore heavily on the episcopal party? Has the Church of Rome ever authorized preaching to any but clergymen? or would it, or could it, under any circumstances, tolerate such an irregularity? Do the Dissenters allow "lay men" to preach in their chapels? Assuredly not. If lay men were allowed to assume this ministerial prerogative, it would ruin their clergy, disenthroned the oligarchy of the pulpit, and bring to nought that "official distinction and authority," which we are assured is not always sufficiently valued \* in their

---

\* "It is my decided conviction, that in some of our churches the pastor

ordained ministers, though “ they are appointed as living oracles to announce, and as ministers of the temple to *interpret*, the utterances and will of God.” (*Discourses of the Rev. Robt. M’All, LL.D.*, i. 421.)

In the Pontifical of the Church of Rome we find that the bishop, in the ordination of a clergyman, confers for the first time the power of preaching when he grants deacon’s orders ; as in the previous grades of doorkeeper, reader, exorcist, acolythe, and subdeacon, this privilege is withheld. In conferring deacon’s orders, the bishop says, “ Dearly beloved son, as thou art now to be promoted to the Levitical order, deeply ponder to what a degree in the church thou art approaching, for a deacon ought to minister at the altar, to baptize and to preach :” and in the Church of England, the bishop says to the deacon, “ Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the church of God, and to preach the same, *if thou be thereto licensed by the bishop.*” This is man’s order ; but it is not so in the word of God.

### § 12. *Ordination.*

The case of Apollos (Acts. xviii. 24), is exactly to the point. “ He was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures . . . . instructed in the way of the Lord ; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.” This was his *ordination*, “ I have believed, and therefore have I spoken ;” and this is the only ordination that a Christian, instructed from the word, is called upon to own—the ordination of faith granted by the Holy Spirit. “ We having the same spirit of faith according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Cor. iv. 13.)

---

is depressed far below his just level. He is considered merely in the light of a speaking brother. He has no official distinction and authority.”—*Church Member’s Guide*, p. 57.

This also was the ordination of others whom Paul mentions "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they *have addicted themselves to the ministry* [*diakonia*] of the saints), that ye submit yourselves to all such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth." (1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.) This is remarkable; "the house of Stephanas," a very wide expression, the whole family had addicted *themselves* to the ministry; they had not been ordained to this ministry by canonical sanctions, but had most irregularly, without the help of a bishop, or of the presbytery, taken upon themselves "the sacred functions." Besides this, they had not only addicted themselves, but *ordained* themselves; for so the translators were bound to render the word *εταξαν*, *etaxan*, if they had had any regard to consistency. In Romans xiii. 1, they so give it, "The powers that be are *ordained* of God;" but here the translation is softened, and a meaning is given which the original will scarcely bear. To these irregular ministers Paul requires that the Corinthians should submit themselves, and not only to them, but to all who, like them, had helped the service of the Gospel. Such is the ordination of the Scriptures! which the translators keep back where it might appear, or bring forward where there is no authority for it, as in Acts i. 22, "Must one be *ordained to be* a witness with us of his resurrection." The ecclesiastical phrase "ordained to be," a phrase most important for the translators in that passage, is wholly wanting in the original. The word is simply *γενεσθαι*, *genesthai*, and we should read the passage thus, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst us . . . must one be a witness with us of his resurrection."

Remembering then that the words "ordination" and "ordain," when used in matters of sacred import, are liable to be misunderstood, and that though they will carry the signification

of "appointment," yet by juxta-position with certain circumstances recorded, they may convey the idea of *clerical consecration*, we shall easily perceive how these words in the English translation of the Scriptures may mislead the unsuspecting reader by an ambiguous sense. In Titus i. 5, we read it thus, "I left thee in Crete . . . . that thou shouldest *ordain* elders in every city as I appointed thee." This certainly looks not a little like consecration or canonical ordination, and we know that the text is continually quoted by the ignorant or the disingenuous to establish the clerical figment, but the words of the original will by no means bear such an interpretation, as we shall presently see. The word "ordain" is the rendering of the verb *καθίστημι*, *kathistemi*, meaning "to appoint," "to make," "to constitute." In the following instances it is so translated :

Matt. xxv. 21. "I will *make* (*katasteso*) thee ruler over many things."

Luke xii. 14. "Who *made* (*katestese*) me a judge or a divider over you."

Rom. v. 19. "As by one man's disobedience many *were made* (*katestathesan*) sinners, so by the obedience of one many *shall be made* (*katastathesontai*) righteous."

Acts vi. 3. "Look out seven men . . . . whom we *may appoint* (*katastesomen*) over this business."

Such being the usage of the word and its true meaning, we can at once perceive how the rendering it by the word *ordain* in Titus i. 5, is calculated to make us suppose that Titus did by clerical consecration ordain certain elders ; whereas he only *appointed* them where churches existed, selecting those individuals who were spiritually gifted for superintendence—recognizing the gift which would determine the station to be taken by the persons professing it, for it was "the gift" and not Titus which



determined what the men were to be ; and according to that gift must they exercise their ministry, whatever form of it “ the gift ” might have imparted : hence Paul enjoins Timothy not to neglect “ the gift ” which he had received, and which was given him by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The prophets prophesied, the presbytery laid on their hands, and Timothy received a gift ; but what that particular gift might be, we are not informed. Assuredly it was not to preach the Gospel and “ administer the sacraments.”

In the case of Titus then he recognized a gift received, and the persons whom he recognized and appointed were the overseers, or superintendents, or, to use an ecclesiastical word, *Bishops*, for this is the name given to them in the next verse ; and it is worthy of remark, that this very passage, which is much quoted by the Episcopalians as one particularly fortifying the views of their party, does in fact sadly damage the diocesan theory, for we find that Titus is appointing overseers or bishops in every city or town in Crete : not one bishop for the whole island to rule the diocese of Crete, but bishops, a plurality of them, that is, more than one, perhaps many, *in every city*, and that by Paul’s express desire ! Crete is an island about two hundred and seventy miles long and fifty miles broad, and in the days of Paul contained a\* hundred cities ; as, therefore, the direction given to Titus was to appoint bishops in every city, there must have been a large number of them in the island—far too large to allow the diocesan system elbow-room. Indeed, it is hereby manifest that “ the bishop ” of the Scriptures could have had a diocese only as large as the city or town in which he dwelt ; though even there his diocese must have been divided, for Paul speaks of these elders or bishops in the plural number, “ Elders in every city,” more than one—two or more ; as many

---

\* Plin. iv. 12. Mela ii. 14. Solin. xvi.

as had received gift for the office ! Neither is this a solitary confutation of the diocesan theory, for we read elsewhere that Paul and Barnabas chose elders “in every city of Lycaonia” (Acts xiv. 23.)

To return, however, to the passage in question, we conclude that it ought thus to be translated—“For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest *appoint* elders in every city, as I had directed thee.”

The original is again translated “ordain” in passages where clerical consecration might thereby seem to be implied. “Every high priest taken from among men is *ordained* for men in things pertaining to God.” (Heb. v. 1.) “Every high priest is *ordained* to offer gifts and sacrifices” (Heb. viii. 3) ; and yet, in another text, relating to the same subject, in the same Epistle, this word is truly translated, “The law *maketh* men high priests which have infirmity” (vii. 28) ; “ordination” was not here wanted, as it speaks not of priests ordaining priests, but in v. 1 and viii. 3, a dubious rendering is given, leaving it uncertain whether the Scripture does not mean in those passages that the high priest, by virtue of his ordination, made offerings and sacrifices ; which, though it was quite true in the law, because no offering in the law could be offered without previous consecration of him that made the offering, yet is not alluded to in the texts in question. Neither is this to be considered a small and unimportant matter ; for when we find in one place of Scripture that Titus “ordained” elders or bishops in the cities of Crete, and in another that the high priest was “ordained” to make offerings and sacrifices, is it surprising that the unsuspecting readers should connect the two ordinations together, and should find in the ordination of the high priest something very like the ordination of the bishop ? A careful examination of the text does, however, immediately dissipate the dream, and brings before us quite another appearance of things.

But the clerical consecration through the instrumentality of the word "ordain," appears in the translation given of the word χειροτονέω, *cheirotoneo*. "And when Paul and Barnabas had *ordained* them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 23.) Here, questionless, it is generally understood that Paul and Barnabas consecrated elders into the clerical office; but let us see how "ordination," thus ingeniously introduced through this word, is, in the only other passages where it occurs, evaded. "God raised up Jesus of Nazareth and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses *chosen before* (*cheirotonehentes*) of God." (Acts x. 41.) Why not "*ordained before* of God;" or if "*chosen*" were the right word here, why was it the wrong one in the other passages?

But again; "we have sent Titus who was *chosen* (*cheirotonehis*) of the churches to travel with us." (2 Cor. viii. 19.) This is truly remarkable; the translators will allow Paul and Barnabas to "ordain" elders, but they will not permit the churches to ordain Titus—"the bishop of Crete;" in fine, on this subject they make the Scriptures say whatever suits their purpose, keeping back or bringing forward that mysterious word "ordain" with marvellous forethought, and never losing sight of that system which they were determined to uphold.

It is worthy of observation, in passing, that though our translators have prevented the ordination of Titus by the churches, they have not been able to suppress the unmanageable fact, that Matthias was chosen or "ordained" into the apostolical office by the one hundred and twenty disciples at Jerusalem, some of whom were women (Acts i. 14, 15, 26), which, if duly considered, must for ever vitiate the origin of the apostolical office, as it is represented to us by the Episcopalians. The apostolical office, they tell us, is perpetuated in their bishops, and the trans-

lators have done their utmost to help this figment by making Judas a bishop (Acts i. 20) ; but granting all this to be true, then we find that the first bishop after our Lord's departure was "ordained" *by the disciples* at Jerusalem ; from which fact we draw this conclusion, that if the fountain-head is of this nature, the whole stream that flows from it ought to partake of the same elements ; but that if the stream be entirely different it cannot spring from the fountain, the waters of which we have analyzed, but must have some other origin congruous with the elements which we find in the stream.

One more instance may suffice : "and he *ordained* ἐποίησε, *epoiēse* twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth and preach." (Mark iii. 14.) This is obviously an important place in which to introduce ordination : it is the record of our Lord's choosing the twelve apostles ; and we so read the fact here as if our Lord had in some way conferred ordination as a necessary preliminary to preaching the Gospel. But "ordain" is here the unwarranted translation of a word which simply means "to make or do" : it occurs some hundred times in the New Testament, but has no where else been thus rendered. If a secondary and figurative meaning were required for the word, "appoint" was obviously that which ought to have been selected, according to the sense in Rev. i. 6, "*has made* (epoiēsen, appointed) us kings and priests." Calvin has, however, thus expressed the meaning—"Et fecit ut duodecim essent secum, et ut emitteret eos ad prædicandum."

Having, then, thus unravelled some of the perplexities of this question, it may be instructive to see the ill use which clergymen have made of the Scriptures in order to perpetuate a delusion which they themselves cannot believe. "When our Lord," says Bishop Beveridge, "had died and risen from the grave, and when he was about to ascend into heaven, he promoted his apostles into the episcopacy, that he *might leave behind him the*

*conservators of his own place.* The first form of this episcopal consecration is recorded in John xx. 21, 22 : where Jesus says to his apostles who were all collected together—‘Peace be unto you : as my Father has sent me, even so send I you ; and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ I confess that our Lord had before this ordained his apostles, but only to preach the Gospel, and to confirm it with miracles. (Mark. iii. 13, 14 ; Matt. x. 1.) But now for the first time after his resurrection, he says, ‘As the Father has sent me, so send I you.’ From which it most clearly appears, that by this second and last ordination, celebrated as it were by many ceremonies, the apostles were advanced to a higher grade than they enjoyed before, or rather (as far as relates to the faculty of ordaining and exercising ecclesiastical discipline), to that very grade into which Christ himself had been consecrated by the Father. By the virtue of their first ordination, therefore, the apostles preached the Gospel ; but by this last consecration they were made bishops, and so, supplying upon earth the place of their absent Lord, they did themselves create other bishops.”

Thus it is that the eyes of ecclesiastics, dimmed by the suffusion of prejudice, and impaired in their healthy faculties, discern the specks of their own apostacy even in the clearest fields of scriptural vision, and conjure up the phantoms of *their order* in the pure kingdom of the Son of God. But mark the fatal error of this strange passage ! for the prelate, in his anxiety to establish ceremonies of consecration and worldly mitres, has forgotten or concealed the fact that, on the occasion recorded in John xx. 21, 22, and on which he builds his whole theory. *Thomas, one of the apostles, was absent ;* for it follows immediately—“but Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.” So that, according to this interpretation of the prelate, “the apostolical college” would be defi-

cient in the mystery of consecration ; and Thomas, a favorite apostle with the Episcopalians, would receive no "faculty of ordaining and exercising discipline," and consequently must have lost his station "as a conservator of the place of Christ," to the no small detriment of "the apostolical succession," and all its fabled benefits and prerogatives.

A word further as to imposition of hands ; take the following instance, which is much urged by clergymen : "Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers . . and as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them ; and when they had fasted and prayed, and *laid their hands on them*, they sent them away." (Acts xiii.) Here then, if this instance is of any avail, it ought to be shown that Paul and Barnabas had never preached the Gospel before ; that they never had been sent forth before to the ministry or service of the Lord ; and that on this occasion they for the first time received license "to preach the Gospel, and administer the sacraments." We find, however, an account of Paul's preaching (Acts ix. 20), some long time, not less than seven years, before this event : nay, both Paul and Barnabas had been preaching *in Antioch* a whole year, and had been sent by the disciples of that city to Jerusalem, with a collection made for the brethren at Judæa (xi. 30), so that their ministry not only elsewhere, but remarkably in this very Antioch, had been for a long time tolerated without imposition of hands. Again, if this was indeed an "ordination" of Paul, we find the teachers and prophets ordaining an apostle !—a fact that would sadly derange the theory of the apostolical succession, which declares that our Lord alone ordained the apostles, and the apostles ordained the clergy. Moreover, it would reverse the order of precedence formally stated in Scripture, "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor.

xii. 28), whereas, in this narrative, supposing Paul and Barnabas to have been ordained by imposition of hands for the ministry, the order must have been “first prophets and teachers, *secondarily* apostles.”

Again, this sending forth of Paul and Barnabas was by the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 4) ; and where is that power of ordination now ? The bishops in the Romish and English communions do indeed *pretend* to convey the Holy Ghost in their ceremonies of ordination ; but we know that is only a pretence. And as for the Presbyterians and Dissenters, they do not now *profess* to convey any spiritual gift, ordinary or extraordinary, by their imposition of hands ; and therefore they practice a ceremony without power or meaning—a mere nullity ; but it was not in the days of the apostles that empty ceremonies were performed. The apostles did not observe customs to perpetuate a delusion, or to consecrate a phantom of forfeited power.

Again, the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, takes pains to make them understand that he did not owe his ministry to any ordination or appointment of man, “I neither received the Gospel of man, neither was I taught it, . . . but when it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood [that is, I consulted not with any man, nor did I follow any man’s advice, order, or direction] : neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia. . . . Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.” This is indeed a plain statement ; and it is manifest thereby that Paul thought nothing of any appointment of man, though that man might be an apostle. When he believed he spoke ; and having received an ordination of God’s grace, he was content with it : “I went not up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles be-

fore me." According to the opinion of the traditional school, the apostles were the fountain of all lawful authority for ministry; but Paul sought not that fountain; nay, he takes pains to inform us that he kept clear of it: therefore, as he was not ordained by the apostles, we may be quite sure he was not ordained several years afterwards by the prophets and teachers of Antioch, when he had been long engaged in the ministry.

Another passage in the Scripture is frequently wrested from its true meaning to prove ordination by imposition of hands. It is in Paul's Epistle to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with *the laying on of the hands* of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14); and again, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift which is in thee by *the putting on of my hands*." (2 Tim. i. 6.) What then was this gift? The gift of preaching the Gospel and license to administer the sacraments? Certainly not: it was a special gift—*χαρισμα*, *charisma*—of the Holy Ghost, which was conveyed to Timothy, as it would appear, by the laying on of the hands of Paul and the elders: and we know that this power did exist in those days; for we find that Peter and John, after praying that the Samaritan converts might receive the gift, "*laid their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost; and when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered money, saying, *Give me also this power*, that on whosoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii. 18.) And again, at Ephesus, Paul found certain disciples who knew only of John's baptism: on these Christians, after they had been baptized in the name of Jesus, Paul laid his hands, and then "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." (Acts xix. 6.) It was therefore some such gift as this which Timothy had received; perhaps the gift of tongues or of prophecy, or the power of working miracles, "signs and wonders,"



any or all of these, or some other gift, of which perhaps there is no record left : and this word *charisma*, which Paul uses in allusion to this gift imparted to Timothy, is the appropriate term for the gifts which the Holy Ghost then conferred on the church. (See Rom. i. 11 ; xii. 6 ; 1 Cor. i. 7 ; xii. 4, 9, 28, 30.)

If then Timothy was ordained into the clerical caste by imposition of hands, so also were the Samaritan converts and the "certain disciples" at Ephesus ; for they also received a gift by imposition of hands : and indeed the advocates of the clerical order ought boldly to assert that the Samaritan and Ephesian disciples were ordained either priests or deacons, if they would build anything on the case of Timothy.

But in all this question we do not find Paul's first *ordination* is ever brought forward, which, after all, but for one inconvenient circumstance, might be more plausibly referred to than any other, as an instance required. Thus it is recorded :— "Ananias . . . . entered into the house ; and putting his hands on him [Paul] said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales ; and he received sight forthwith, and was baptized." (Acts ix. 17.)

This instance is full to the point that Paul received the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, and that it was at the very beginning of his service in the church ; this therefore looks much like "ordination by imposition of hands ;" but then, unfortunately, if this be allowed, it would follow that Paul was ordained before he was baptized, an uncanonical irregularity wholly unknown in clergyman's law ; and moreover, the person who then "ordained him by imposition of hands" was not a bishop or elder, but simply a "certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias" (ver. 10) ; in fact, according to the Papal ideas of these

days, a mere layman : and yet this “lay-man,” without the assistance of any of the clergy, without the presence of any bishop, lays his hands on Paul, and so confers on him the Holy Ghost ! We can therefore well understand how the advocates of a “regular ordained ministry” are disposed to pass over this remarkable occurrence, and prefer rather to quote the imposition of hands by the church at Antioch (Acts xiii.) which has been already examined.

Having then seen that imposition of hands does not, according to the Scripture record, confer the power of “preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments,” and having seen also that in many cases the imposition of hands took place, where confessedly no clerical designation or privilege was intended, and that this is conceded even by clergymen, we need not feel any remnant of perplexity on this question, but we may conclude by stating—

1. That imposition of hands sometimes means simple benediction : “Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray : and he laid his hands on them.” (Matt. xix. 13.)

2. Sometimes recognition of service in the church, as in the case of the seven brethren chosen “to serve tables,” which certainly was not ordination to the “ministry,” as the serving of tables on that occasion was markedly and avowedly kept distinct from “ministry of the word.” (Acts vi. 4-6.)

3. Sometimes commendation to a particular work, and that by express command of the Holy Ghost. (Acts xiii.)

4. Sometimes an act whereby the gift of the Holy Ghost was imparted, as when Ananias, “a certain disciple,” laid his hands on the apostle Paul (Acts ix. 27) ; or, as when the apostles gave this gift to others (Acts viii. 18 ; xix. 6) ; or, as in the case of Timothy and the elders—a case which is moreover peculiarly designated as having been in obedience to prophecy ; or—

5. A visible sign of performing a miracle, as when the disciples to whom the power was given "laid their hands on the sick, and they recovered." (Mark xvi. 18.)

§ 13. *Ministry in the Church entirely subordinate to Brotherly Love.*

The train of remark thus far pursued should be considered but as introductory to a still more important view of the subject—a view nearly forgotten or unknown in these days—viz., that "ministry," when rightly understood, is not merely or mainly for propagating Christianity by preaching, not merely for government, or securing discipline, or keeping the people in subjection, but for preserving in vigorous healthfulness the spiritual body to which it appertains. The evidence of its accomplishing this end is to be sought and recognized in the degree in which it is promotive of the *love of the brethren*. Yes, Christian reader, understand this truth that God's ministry is appointed by his most wise ordinance—not according to man's thoughts, to produce a well-drilled regiment under effectual clerical management, which is the utmost extent of excellence that most people ever look to when arguing for an "ordained ministry"—but it is intended as a help to the New Commandment, by which the world is to distinguish Christ's disciples. (John xiii. 34.) In all the passages where God's ministry is mentioned in the New Testament this is made apparent; for the mind of the Spirit concerning the ministry which he raises up, is, that it is the nursery of that love without which a visible church is an inoperative and lifeless thing, a machine out of order, and therefore useless. And hence it is that when Paul wishes to urge the love of the brethren, he, as a matter of course, connects it with "ministry;" and when he talks of ministry, he concludes as naturally, pur-

suings only an obvious concatenation of thought with the kindred subject of love. In the Epistle to the Ephesians he says, "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, *forbearing one another in love*; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—*there is one body.*" (iv. 1–4.) And having been brought by this expression of his wish and prayer to mention the "one body," he immediately proceeds to a description of that body, and the appearance it should present, in order to be capable of eliciting this "forbearance of love and bond of peace," for which he pleads. Now this appearance is of several gifts of the Spirit manifested in the body at large, "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*;" this is the body which possesses the power of growth, not a comely block, chiselled by man's art into a handsome but dead image of the church, but the true church endowed with the faculty of augmentation, and "growing unto an holy temple in the Lord." In *this* body the apostle supposes, or rather he expects that love may be pre-eminent; not as it is caricatured in the form of a living clerical head, and lifeless *lay* members; not as a regular ordained minister, in his own single person and actions, represents the energy of all the torpid limbs; but as "compacted by that which every joint supplieth;" for every part is to be "effectually working;" and then, and not till then, the body may grow, may be increasing in the life of love, or, as Paul expresses it, "unto the edifying of itself in love." (v. 16.)

In the Epistle to the Romans, he closes the subject of gifts in the church by these remarkable words, "Let love be without dissimulation" (xii. 9), because he evidently supposed that the undissembled love of the saints might find an atmosphere suited to its necessities, where the whole body is *allowed* at least to

receive the energies of the Spirit, for any form of ministry which it might please the Lord, the Spirit of life, to bestow. But no such atmosphere as this exists, or can exist, when "a regular ordained ministry" has inflicted ministerial death on the whole body, and when the clergyman has been appointed by man to be the sole pastor, teacher, evangelist, ruler, and prophet; just as if the human body, in a fit of lunacy, had elected the hand or the foot to perform the functions of all the other members, which it had commanded, as a consequence of this infatuated election, to remain in a decorous and reverential inactivity. A body under such discipline would soon die, and all *Christian bodies*, so called, where "the one-man system" prevails, are, in their corporate capacity, virtually dead: they have cut off the flow of life which was meant to feed all the members, and have given the monopoly of vitality to one favored limb, which consequently cannot perform its own functions as it ought, and is wholly inefficacious in imparting any show of life to the rest of the body.

In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul says, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. xiv.); and the precept is in many ways remarkable. In the 12th chapter he had discoursed at large on the gifts and ministries of the Spirit; in the 13th, by a connection which is not often noticed, he introduces the subject of love, or *agapé*, and then he begins the 14th chapter by these words, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts," as a preface to all that he has to say concerning the order of the church in that chapter; so that, in fact, the 13th chapter, though apparently a parenthesis between the 12th and 14th, is most intimately connected with them both. *It is part of the same subject*, because that love, *agapé*, or charity, which has been made beautiful to all generations by Paul's magnificent eulogy, is not the charity of isolated Christians, but of the children of God living harmoniously together as one redeemed

family, under the guidance and ministrations of the Spirit, and manifesting the life of the body according to God's design, and not according to the wisdom of man. This is that love of which Paul speaks (1 Cor. xiii.) : neither is it possible to show that love, or to fulfil the precepts of that much admired chapter where this is not understood ; nor can the love of which he speaks be brought forth, or seen *in the body*, wherever the clerical theory has superseded the faith once delivered to the saints. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, *to the which ye are called in one body*, and be ye thankful." (Col. iii. 15.)

But it is not in general principles only that we discover ministry and love united, as if they were different representations of one theme, and as if one did of necessity introduce the other, so that where we see one, we may be sure that the other is not far distant ; but we find positive precepts addressed to the saints, directing them to act as pastors to one another, and, in so doing, to show forth this very love, which betokens the living and the growing body of Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, it is written, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. . . . But exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. iii. 12.) They are to warn, to admonish one another *daily* ; every day they are to be guarding the sheepfold ; every day they are to be looking warily, lest the evil heart of unbelief open a breach for the enemy in the visible household of faith. But whilst they are called upon to be thus watchful for one another's souls, not a syllable is dropped whereby we might understand that this was to be the exclusive duty of "an ordained minister." Indeed, the fact that such a precept is addressed to "the brethren," renders it impossible that the Hebrews should have been acquainted with "an ordained ministry," invested with those exclusive powers and prerogatives which we habitually in these days consider inseparable

from "ministry." The clergy of all parties often assure us in their sermons that exhortation of the fold is their peculiar province, in which no one may interfere ; but we find it quite otherwise in the word of God.

Paul, in addressing the Thessalonians, writes to them thus :— "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men." (1 Thess. v. 14.) Words which exactly describe the duties that "ordained ministers" frequently assure us, devolve upon themselves alone ; neither do any of their hearers think otherwise, so naturally do men tread in the sheep-track of tradition, without inquiring if the fair and ample work of God may have possibly furnished them with more healthful ways. Other passages there are largely to the same effect. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works ; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but exhorting one another." (Heb. x. 24, 25.) "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him do it as the oracles of God : if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.)

Now not only are such passages of high value, as incidentally confirming the truth, that the duties always assigned to the clergy alone in the clerical form of Christianity, are, in the *scriptural* form of it, apportioned to all believers, but as showing that the very offices of the supposed ministerial prerogative are shared amongst the apostles, and all the saints of their day. For instance, does Paul say to the Thessalonians, "that he comforted and charged every one of them, as a father doth his children, that they should walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. ii. 12) ? then this is the very duty which he would assign to the whole body of

Thessalonian believers, when he tells them "to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak." Again, do we find that Barnabas *exhorted* all the believers at Antioch, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord (Acts xi. 24) ? then, also, do we find the Hebrew church reminded of their duty to "exhort one another daily, lest any of them should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." That Paul and Barnabas should thus exhort the saints, the clerical school would think quite proper, because they were apostles, and had been "ordained by imposition of hands;" but the same school would see nothing but irregularity in lay men daily imitating the apostles. Moreover, it is to be observed, that though, in the epistles to the Hebrews and Thessalonians, there is distinct reference made to those who were "over them in the Lord" (Heb. xiii. 17 ; 1 Thess. v. 12), yet it is not on those overseers that the duty of exhortation is pressed by the apostle : the epistles are not directed to the overseers ; the building-up of the saints is not referred to them ; admonition, exhortation, comfort, and warning are not spoken of as their province (though doubtless exhortation and comfort were also in their province), but all the church is addressed, as if all the saints were mutually to edify one another, yea and mutually to teach and minister to one another, as when Paul, having explained to the Thessalonians the second coming of the Lord, concludes thus, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The epistle to the Philippians furnishes similar evidence, and in abundance. Indeed, the whole texture of that epistle is to this point ; for though the overseers and servants of the church are mentioned in the opening of the epistle, *after* the saints (i. 1), yet the whole doctrine of the epistle is addressed to the brethren ; and it is not of "the clergy," but of all the brethren that Paul speaks, when he prays that "their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, and that they may



approve things that are excellent [or things that differ],” a prayer which by many would be thought only applicable to clergymen. It is “the brethren” (i. 12), that he “would have understand” how his imprisonment at Rome had been made a means of *many* of the brethren waxing confident to preach Christ, and that he rejoiced they had done so, though these “many” preachers were unquestionably not clergymen. It is “the brethren” he desires to “stand fast in one spirit, striving for the faith of the Gospel.” (i. 17.) Them also he admonishes “to hold forth the word of life” (ii. 16); to “beware of evil-workers” (iii. 2); “to walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing,” as he himself did (iii. 16); “to stand fast in the Lord” (iv. 2), &c., &c.; and all this he makes sure by commencing his letter “to all the saints,” and by carefully finishing it “to all the saints.” (iv. 21.) And all this is the more remarkable, because he does not omit the overseers and servants of the church (“bishops and deacons,” Eng. Trans.) He mentions them indeed, but *after* the saints whom they serve, and then he takes no farther notice of them, classes them altogether as one body, and never in one instance so expresses himself, as if he thought the overseers and servants had some official prerogative which should entitle them, as separated from the “lay men,” to receive his instructions and execute his precepts.

Again, in writing to the Colossians, he addresses “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ,” and none others: it is the brethren whom he wishes to “increase in the knowledge of God” (i. 10), “and unto all riches of the full assurance of the understanding.” (ii. 2.) He tells the brethren that “they are complete in Christ” (ii. 10), and that, therefore, “*no man* should judge them in meat and drink or holydays or sabbaths.” He bids them beware, lest any man “spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, or beguile them of their reward, by intruding into those things which they have not seen;” he warns

them not to be subject to ordinances, "the commandments and doctrines of men;" he reminds them that "their speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that they may know how they ought to answer every man," and that they should "stand perfect and complete in the will of God;" and then, after particularly addressing "wives, husbands, children, servants, and masters," he adds nothing about clergymen or official ministers. The message to Archippus (iv. 17) has been already examined, and, therefore, need not here be again discussed, but supposing, for argument's sake, that Archippus was an ordained minister—say, bishop of the Colossians—we then find Paul in a sort of Postscript, desiring the church to remind that dignitary to fulfil his ministry, whilst the dignitary himself is wholly passed over in all the rest of the epistle.

Now then, let these things be applied to the order of the sects; suppose that a Christian from some distant region, acquainted with Christianity only as it is presented in the New Testament, and following the language and ideas of the Scriptures alone, were to write a letter to Christians in a certain parish in our country, according to the usages of the Pauline epistles, what would be the style of his letter? He would address it to the believers in such a town, and whatever might be the importance of his communications, he would of course take no notice of the clergyman of the parish; he would not, as in these days, direct the whole subject-matter to the priest; "Reverend Sir," would be to him an unknown formulary; and if he were informed that our customs required such letters, both in form and substance, to be addressed to the clergyman, and that the minister would consider it an insult if it were otherwise, and that "the saints" were in these days all "laymen," excepting only "the minister," who was ordained to be their ruler and teacher; and that "the saints" now would deem it strange and indecorous if a letter about religion was addressed to them,

and not to their minister—would not this foreigner from a distant region naturally conclude that we had changed our religion, and that we had ceased, in fact, to be Christians? How could he come to any other conclusion? And who that examines ministry in the New Testament, and compares it with ministry in the apostacy, can doubt but that there has been effected a fundamental revolution to the order which God appointed for the edification of His Church?

But then it will be said that Paul *does* allude to those “who are over them in the Lord.” True; he does; but his allusions are in perfect keeping with the order then existing, and tend to establish all that has been advanced in this argument. There *was* rule in the church; the Spirit unquestionably raised up government; government was a gift, a *charisma*, and it was sometimes united to, and sometimes separated from, teaching: “*especially* they who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. v. 17), is an expression by which we ascertain that some of “the leaders” (*proestotes*) did *not* labor in word and doctrine, for if it were not so, Paul’s distinction would be unintelligible, or rather would have no meaning at all. But wherever government made its appearance, the grace in the saints was supposed to afford a fair field for its cheerful and loving reception: “We beseech you, brethren, know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” (1 Thess. v. 12.) What is the superintendence of the persons here mentioned, and what the foundation of the government? *love*; “esteem them very highly in love;” for where there is not love there cannot be esteem in the Church of God, though in the churches of men, esteem for the clerical rulers is for the most part obtained on other grounds. Station in society, rank, wealth, political power, oratorical talent, official prerogative, too frequently command the reverential regard of the people for their clergy;

and sectarian zeal usually adds force to these considerations—to say nothing of superstitious ignorance, which powerfully prevails in most of our parishes, and which leads the so-called Protestant to esteem “the minister” with exactly the same feeling that a darkling Papist reveres his priest. There are, indeed, instances where the ministers are much beloved by their disciples; but, more commonly, love will be found to have but a small share in the esteem which they enjoy; for as the theory of official power, and the idea of prerogative, influence all the arrangements of human ministry, the ruling party usually expects as a right, and the ruled yields as a custom, that portion of reverence which is decorously conceded to official distinction. When, therefore, the prelate, or the dissenting minister, finds “government” in God’s Church, let him not, each in his own region, cry out, “That is my ground! that is my place! for I have been ordained to be over the flock, and by ordination I claim authority”—for though the vulture-eye of ambition will ever find some twig to perch on, it frequently happens that the twig will not support the weight which is prepared for it. All authority is not the same authority; the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another. Terrestrial authority has, it may be, its mitres, its acts of synods, and all the smothering weight of ecclesiastical canons; or it has, it may be, its elective chair, its salaried orations, and its mercenary sceptre, with an usurpation of all ministerial life, and an assumption by one man of that which, if it really exist, should be open to all: and these things have their glory; but heavenly authority in the church, that which comes down with the gifts distributed to the saints, is the manifestation of superintending care in those whose hearts the Lord directs and enables to watch over the footsteps of the flock, and by counsel and character, by prayer and precept, by patience and forbearance, by gentle firmness, and by spiritual wisdom to keep aloof from the

enclosure those things which would disturb communion, or prevent the Beloved One from coming into "his garden, and eating his pleasant fruits." Government is a distinct gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 28)—and it is not in the power of man, by election or any other known process, to produce this blessing. It is, indeed, very easy to make an appointment to *ecclesiastical* rule, either by royal mandate, or patronal nomination, or popular suffrage; but wide is the difference between *ecclesiastical* and *spiritual* rule; man's law can give the outline and the shadow of spiritual rule, but the substance, the living and the powerful reality, can be imparted only by Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Spiritual rule is neither for lucre nor for lordship (1 Pet. v. 2, 3), but it is a branch of service, of ministry, of *diaconia*; a branch springing out of the true Vine; a form of the life of Him, who, in making Himself the servant of all, thereby also made Himself the Lord and Master of His disciples. (John xiii. 14.) Government is the lowest and the highest service in the Church: it is the lowest, because He that is "over the flock," and has been called unto this service by the Lord, must ever be washing the disciples' feet. The basin and the towel are the badge of this government; and how low it calls upon those who are exercised in it to stoop down; how deep is the humiliation, how trying to faith and patience, how wearisome to flesh and blood, how closely surrounded with anxieties and solitudes, how deeply acquainted with tears and prayers and sighs, how conversant with despondency, feebleness, and weariness, none can tell or imagine who have looked at these things only through the medium of *ecclesiastical* custom, but have not tasted them in spiritual power. "And who is sufficient for these things?" Truly, we can reply only in the words of Scripture, "Our sufficiency is of God, who hath fitted us to be servants of the New Testament." But in the service there is

also a recompense, which, though it is to be nothing less in the day of full payment than a crown of glory (1 Pet. v. 4), is not in the mean time forgotten by the Chief Shepherd, who knows how to reward his servants, even during the heat and burden of of the day. Therefore we plead for government : and we know that when it appears it strengthens the church, because it draws forth more love, augments the activity of service in *all*, and establishes that peace which Paul connects with the presidency of a few and the service of all. (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.)

If then believers should *any* where be gathered together for fellowship, and breaking of bread, and searching the word, and for prayer, they have a strong ground of hope that the Head of the church may remember them in communicating this blessing also ; but if it should be made to tarry long, it would be better for them to wait *any* time, rather than release themselves from the difficulty by sending for deliverance to a college of priests, by trying the talents of “ candidates,” and finally by setting up Egypt’s idol for adoration, and “ rejoicing in the works of *their own* hands.” (Acts vii. 41.)

### § 14. *Tendency of Clerical Rule.*

In one word, then, the difference is wide between ecclesiastical and spiritual rule ; for not only is every known form of ecclesiastical government the result of a false principle, and a standing evidence of universal apostacy, but the whole tendency of clerical rule is to disturb the communion of saints, or rather to render it impossible. Hence it is, that in all our standard theology, always of course of clerical origin, we shall in vain look for the communion of saints. Doctrinal Christianity itself is continually being misrepresented by our most spiritual writers, owing to the influence of the prevalent notions of “ min-

istry." As the love of the brethren *cannot* germinate where the clergy are distinguished officially from the laity, and as indeed this love has, owing to this long-established distinction, been altogether forgotten and abandoned, so do we find that all writers, even the very best, teach experimental Christianity as a private personal matter, apart from union with "the one body" of Christ. Many precious volumes have been published to establish what are called the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; but when established the application of them is invariably made to isolated individuals; and all the remarks, all the eloquence, all the affections of the teachers, tend to this one point—the necessity of our working out our own salvation, and of sustaining our faith in private communion with God. The glory of the living temple, which, in Scripture, refers exclusively to the *collective* body of all the saints, is thus neglected and omitted, and one-half of the New Testament becomes a sealed book, which theologians are unable to open, and which remains in consequence shut up to themselves and their unsuspecting disciples. The first epistle of John, for instance, is far out of the reach of all the pulpits and professors' chairs. It never has been, nor ever can be, explained by any *clergyman*, so as to display the genuine meaning of the inspired writer. Other portions of the word which treat of justification by faith, or any of the cardinal points of the schools, are well argued so long as the text speaks only of those points; but when the word leads on to the ministry and the communion of saints, the expositors' chariot-wheels drag heavily, and all becomes confusion, misconstruction, and dogmatical error. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another," is an unknown doctrine in professing Christendom; for it refers not to philanthropy, nor to courtesy, nor to general benevolence, nor to alms-giving charity, nor to sympathetic beneficence, nor to love of our sect, or of those who belong to that sect, nor to

attachment to a choice preacher, but to something else which sects and clergymen have never seen nor heard, nor even imagined in a happy dream. And how should they? for God's secret of the new creation can only be known to those who obey him: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" "And this commandment have we from him. That he who loveth God, love his brother also." We have seen what the Scriptures teach concerning ministry; and whilst ministry lasted according to the Scriptures, so also, beyond all question, did the communion of saints last; but when they had renounced the ministry of the Spirit, and had set up carnal government instead, then the new commandment (John xiii. 34) speedily disappeared; and in lieu of the first glory, they accepted that which we now see all around us, the gloom of sectarian desolation and the imposing solemnities of clerical death. Hence the very best representations of *ecclesiastical* rule, whether in church or chapel, are but well-acted scenes of the long tragedy which will be continually on the stage till the Just One shall come, "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds:" for now men sit in darkness, and though the new commandment has fallen into oblivion, yet are they not disturbed with so sad a loss, though it be, *for the body*, the loss of everything. A regular ministry they possess, and all its necessary appendages, with everything that can make it respectable in the opinion of the world: and many able preachers and excellent men there are in the systems; but the communion of believers is forgotten withal, the heavenly calling of the saints is passed over; very much of the Scriptures remains unknown and unexamined, visible Christianity stands before the world an unsightly phenomenon of sects and parties; and the living temple, one body and one spirit in Christ, has disappeared like those splendid but illusive cities which, pictured on the vapors of a Syrian atmosphere, fill the spectator with admiration and astonishment, and then



anon dissolve into irretrievable ruin, leaving the wilderness more grim and cheerless than before.

### § 15. *True Idea of Ministry in the Church.*

A correct idea of the ministry in the Lord's Church cannot be formed apart from a perception of the true genius and ends of the church itself. The individual man in the past periods of the church has been held in abeyance ; now he is brought forward and elevated. Every man of the church is a church itself in the least form. Freedom and rationality are his grand characteristics, and for any man to waive the exercise of these is to surrender his most distinctive prerogatives. Each individual must see truth for himself, and order his life according to it, or he can have no claim to discipleship in the church. Still, as there are states of instruction in the progress of regeneration, so there is a corresponding office of teaching, and one which grows in an orderly way out of the nature of the case. It is the normal product of the exigencies of men's states, and is primarily referable to the law of charity, which dictates that one who has more of good and truth should impart of his abundance to him that has less ; and it is not to be questioned that the subject of ministry comes properly under the head of *charity*, of which it is one prominent department. Exciting good and imparting truth is spiritually feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, as every one knows who has himself received any adequate measure of this species of benefaction. Action of this nature towards its appropriate objects is the very law of the regenerate life. It requires not that a man should be called by official designation to exercise the functions of neighborly love. Such an universal duty cannot be exclusively confined to any distinct class or caste.

This will be more evident if we look at the primitive formation of a society of the church. A community of this kind is one of an entirely voluntary character, composed of individuals drawn together from interior affinities and for a common end. They propose to themselves the instituting of divine worship, and the mutual edification of each other. They agree to walk together in the ordinances of the Lord's house, and somewhat of a mutual covenant is implied in the union. Their relation to each other is more than that of mere aggregation. It involves the idea of organization. There is, in the first place, a community of spirit, of interest, of aims, operating as an attractive force to draw them together, and then there is a kind of spiritual crystallization, which brings them into an organized form. It is wholly immaterial in what manner the associative influence first begins to operate. It may be from preaching, or it may be from reading. But the right of Christian believers thus to come together, and to organize themselves into a society, is a primary and indefeasible right, derived from the Lord himself, and ratified in the explicit declaration, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This is the charter of heaven under which any number of Christians is as fully authorized to form themselves as a banking company among men in the business world is at liberty to avail itself of the general law to that effect. For the exercise of this right they are not dependent upon any other society, or upon any clergyman. They are at full liberty to form themselves into such a fraternity in obedience to the Lord's will, and with a view to secure its appropriate ends. To this they are amply competent in themselves, being authorized from the highest possible source ; and it may sometimes be important, for the sake of a more emphatic assertion of Christian liberty, to decline any other co-operation on the part of laity or clergy from abroad, than that of their brotherly sympathies and good wishes.

Supposing then, such a society to be duly formed, it is obvious that the performance of use, bearing upon the general interests of the Lord's kingdom, is the great end which they are ever to have in view. The action of such a society is a kind of secretion of spiritual use, just as the secretion of an organ in the human body tends to the conservation and well-being of the whole. And as every particle of every organ contributes its share in the elaborating process, so is each individual in such a society to furnish his respective quota of influence to the perfection of the whole. In this respect they all stand upon an equal footing. In the common aim of the whole every member has an equal interest. The humblest disciple has as much at stake as the highest and most distinguished. His soul is of as much importance, his comfort and prosperity in spiritual things as much an object of Divine and angelic care, as that of his otherwise more favored brother, and he in like manner is under equal obligation to study in his place and relations the best good of the entire body. All this, be it observed, lies upon the society from its very inception, and prior to the appointment of any one or more individuals to what is termed the clerical or ministerial office ; for in the nature of the case, the particular church or society must be prior to its ministers, just as any civil society or government is prior to its officers. In this primitive state of things every one is virtually and potentially a minister, preacher, or priest, because every one is a church in the least form. Nor do we see any adequate reason why this prerogative should be considered as *ever* alienable from its rightful subjects. The exercise of it may be waived to a greater or less degree under peculiar circumstances, as when the superior gifts of one, in any particular department, may supersede for a time those of another ; but so far as the principle is concerned, we hold it undeniable that every man of the church, from the necessity of things, is potentially a minister. And in this matter it is im-

portant to hold fast to first principles, for it is here that usurpation generally makes its entrance, by falsifying or sophisticating some fundamental truth, and making it, thus transformed, the basis of a system of tyrannous domination and oppression.

But it will be asked, Is there no such thing as a distinct function of teaching or preaching in the church? Can anything be more obvious than the scriptural recognition of such a function? And if there is to be teaching, must there not be teachers? Does not a function imply functionaries? If all are teachers, where are the taught? If all are leaders, where are the led? To this we reply, that diversity of uses in the Lord's spiritual body does not necessarily create diversity of *grades* in those who perform such uses. We acknowledge at once the necessity of teaching and of teachers in the church; but we deny that this fact lays a foundation for that radical distinction of *clergy* and *laity* which has obtained currency throughout Christendom, and which has opened a Pandora's box of evils and mischiefs to the church of the past. The church of the present and the future is not a church in representatives, but in realities. The substantial things which the priesthood represented are now enjoyed by the general body of Christians, and being diffused throughout the whole of that body, they cannot be appropriated or monopolized by any one class. Yet a variety of spiritual gifts is requisite in building up the body, and certain gifts pertain to some which confer a special ability on the score of teaching and leading. Their gifts and endowments are perceived by the society to be adapted to their exigencies, and they receive and acknowledge them in this relation. They do not confer any power upon them: they do not, strictly speaking, appoint them; they simply acknowledge them as qualified, and thereby designated by the Lord himself to officiate in this capacity in the performance of a use which their states render requisite. Such individuals fall into the centre, instead of the

circumference, as a matter of course, and in an orderly state of things it is just as natural that their peculiar province should be recognized and acknowledged as that the corporeal system at large should acknowledge the all-pervading and sustaining action of the heart. But we see nothing in all this that necessarily constitutes them a permanently distinct class, invested with any kind of rule or authority other than that which emanates from the truths they communicate. They are to the whole society what a particular organ is to the whole human body. To the eye, for instance, pertains the functions of seeing, but it cannot see apart from the body to which it belongs. So with the ear, the nose, the tongue. They all have their several uses in the bodily economy, but they are not on this account in any manner *distinct* from the body. So in like manner the use or function of teaching or preaching in Christian societies does not constitute a *distinct grade or order* in such societies, discriminated from the mass as the *clergy* are now supposed to be discriminated from the *laity*—a distinction which we have endeavored to show to be unfounded.

We are well aware how difficult it will be for many of our readers to rest in our conclusion, that there may be a distinction in use which does not amount to a distinction in office, or rather in official order or caste. Nor are we sure that we can make our idea any more intelligible by expansion or illustration. If it does not strike the mind with somewhat of an intuitive perception, it will not probably be apprehended after pages of elaborate exposition. We would say, however, that by the distinct order or office of the clergy in the church, we mean an order *which perpetuates itself* by some special form of ordination or inauguration, wherein the body of the church, or the *laity*, as they are termed, have no share. That such an order of men, whether called priests, clergymen, or ministers, was designed to exist in the Christian church is what we venture to deny ; while

at the same time we freely admit and strenuously maintain that there is a function of teaching which is to be discharged by those who have the requisite qualifications therefor. If these two propositions are deemed inconsistent with and destructive of each other, so it must be. In our view they are not.

### § 16. *Who may proclaim the Gospel.*

The function of teaching in a wider sense, or of preaching or proclaiming the gospel as an evangelist or missionary to the world at large, we would place on the broad ground of a general right of all men to utter and enforce by argument such sentiments as they may entertain on any subject whether secular or sacred. Especially, if no exceptions are taken to the sentiments themselves, there can be no just exceptions taken to the most free and unreserved expression of them by their holders. This open and free declaration of opinion is the more legitimate import of the word *preach*, which is derived from a root expressive of the office of a *public crier*, a *proclaimer*, or *herald* of tidings whether good or bad. When the tidings are good it is *gospel*, another name for the good news, *par eminence*, of the kingdom of heaven, and we would ask how much ecclesiastical authority one requires to empower him to declare the glad tidings of the kingdom, especially when we learn that every one to whom the message comes is to be an echo to its gracious burden; "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. *And let him that heareth say, Come.* And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Is not this a sufficient commission?\*

---

\* "Every faithful preacher of the Gospel, in fulfilling the will of Christ, claims to be considered as invested with a necessary *ministerial authority*; an authority simply and entirely resulting from the message which he promulgates and the command which he fulfils; an authority under which the

The origin, then, we contend, of the ministry in the church is in the exigencies of the church. The office is necessarily created by the spiritual demands of the members. Certain gifts are in requisition, and the possession of the gifts, together with the genuine love of the use, is the warrant for their exercise. The true ministerial function is therefore intrinsically prior to all ordination administered by man, for we are now in quest of the

---

Christian evangelist goes forth to execute a commission extending to all nations, and to every individual of every nation under heaven ; a moral or rather spiritual authority, distinct from the pastoral jurisdiction, which rests upon particular relations originating in appointment and choice ; distinct from whatsoever has its source in the will of man ; and attaching to whomsoever, as the bearer of the evangelical message, we may regard as the organ of Christ. The ministry is of necessity one in kind : it must, therefore, as regards the discharge of it by any individual, be either that of 'the Spirit of truth,' or of 'the Spirit of error;' it is either efficient, as the preaching of Christ, or it is wholly inefficient and unauthorized. Official designation, ecclesiastical dignity, can make no difference in the character of the ministry exercised by any man in the Church of Christ. The humblest self-constituted teacher, who is possessed of the appropriate credentials of the ministerial character, in the purity of his doctrines, the success of his labors, and the unblemished tenor of his life, is invested with an *authority* to which no circumstantial additaments of human appointment are requisite to impart validity ; it requires no sanction from man, for with man it does not originate. A preacher may be undeniably deficient in some of those subsidiary qualifications which constitute a *natural fitness* for the office of teacher ; but the capacity for preaching the truth of Christ, so as to fulfil the purposes of the Christian ministry, is, let it never be forgotten, a spiritual capacity ; and where this is possessed, it is in vain, and worse than in vain, for us to withhold our recognition of the essential character and authority of the Christian minister as existing in that individual, how humble soever his station or his acquirements. With the utmost propriety such a man may appeal to those to whose consciences he has been commended by the efficacy of his pious labors : 'If I be not' a minister 'unto others, yet doubtless I am to you ; for the seal of my' ministry 'are ye in the Lord.' — *Conder's Protest. Non-Conform.* vol i. 166.

manner in which the very first minister becomes such. We are endeavoring to re-mount to the primo-primitive source of a church ministry. We have seen that it is merely one form of that complex of uses which pertains to a society of Christians. It is a use of serving rather than of ruling. A *minister* is a *servant*, and not a lord or master ; this is the very meaning of the term. But the service of the church is multiform, and so is the ministry. As every member has a service to perform, so he has a ministry to discharge, and nothing would be more pernicious than to regard the employment of a teaching minister as carrying with it a *supersedeas* to all other forms of spiritual service.

§ 17. *Does this View infringe the Principles of true Order ?*

But here we can easily foresee that the claims of *order* will be urged. Is it not opening the door to confusion and every evil work to concede such license on the score of preaching or teaching ? Will it not be a grievous infraction of order and a serious periling of the best interests of the church if the seal of sanctity be taken off from the clerical office, and the current distinction between clergy and laity virtually done away ? As the office is a public office and the good name and well-being of the church is at stake, should there not be an express authority conferred before any one assumes to himself the responsibility of the function ? Does not the church need protection against the inroads of false teachers and unworthy representatives ? Our answer to this will suggest itself from the tenor of what goes before. The question fairly arises, if our premises are sound, where the authority sought resides. As the office of teaching grows directly out of the wants of a society, and its authority lies in its use, the existence of a ministry cannot de-



pend upon an antecedent ordaining clergy any more than an effect can re-act and re-produce its cause. The ministry of a society ante-dates that of an order of clergy pertaining to the church at large, granting for the present that such an order may exist.

If the view now presented be still thought to be pregnant with evil results, it behooves us to look well to the remedies proposed and see whether they may not, in the long run, involve greater evils than those they are intended to cure or prevent. This they will surely do if they conflict with genuine order and virtually deny first principles of truth or freedom. It is not unusual to hear it said that persons not duly inducted should not be *allowed* to officiate in the ministry. But who is authorized to prevent them, and whence came the power? What are the credentials shown for it? Is not every man at liberty to utter his sentiments on any subject that he deems of moment to his fellow-men, and even if those sentiments should be intrinsically erroneous or mischievous, are not the evils incident to a restraining power greater than any that could flow from the most unlimited freedom of speech? So we sometimes hear men talk about certain portions of the human race not being fit for civil freedom. But whence arose the right of one portion of mankind to judge for another on this score? Does not God create all men free? How has it happened that one class of men deems itself entitled to sit in judgment on the capacity of another to enjoy the birthright with which the Creator endowed them? And how can they restrict this right without injustice and oppression? We do not of course say that all men *are* equally prepared to use civil freedom without abusing it, but we do say that this fact does not annul the original right, and that the evils of usurped coercion are greater in the final issue than those of self-asserted liberty.

So in the matter before us. We know of no authority, no tribunal, which is empowered to restrain the exercise of any

man's freedom in the proclamation of what he regards as truths of the most solemn import. If such a prompting proceed from the working of genuine neighborly love it will act in wisdom and will be acknowledged by those endowed with spiritual perception, for wisdom is justified of her children. If the voice of the shepherd is heard in such a man, the sheep will turn towards him, but not otherwise, for they do not know the voice of a stranger. But men are as free in the matter of hearing as of speaking. No one can be compelled to hear what he does not wish to hear, or what, upon hearing once, he does not wish to hear again. If an individual assuming to be of the church preaches a doctrine at variance with her truths, there is no remedy but in the sounder views which it may encounter in the minds of the hearers, and in the rectifications of time and Providence. In the end truth will eliminate and vindicate itself from the perversions of error, and though the injury done in the mean time in the name of the church is to be regretted, yet the violent suppression of an inborn right would be still more to be deplored. On the whole, therefore, the evils resulting by possibility from this source do not strike us as being so formidable as might appear to a slight reflection. Human prudence is prone to multiply the fancied safeguards of truth, when in fact it is most effectually panoplied by its own inherent might.

The foregoing train of remark does, if we mistake not, develop somewhat of the nature and design of the Christian ministry. It is not an office of ruling, except so far as truth itself is of a ruling nature when presented to the mind. It is simply one form of the multifarious uses which are requisite to the building up of the church in the goods and truths of the Lord's kingdom, and one, too, as we conceive, which was never intended to be made so completely paramount to every other use as it has come to be in the Christian world at large. It was never designed to be erected into an institution which should stand

complete by itself as a virtual hierarchy. That such has been the case we attribute to the subtle working, in all deceivableness of unrighteousness, of the love of dominion which has never found a more congenial abode than in the bosom of the clergy. This spirit will never lack logic to justify its usurpations, and its *proton pseudos*, its fundamental falsity, will ever be found to lie in asserting a radical distinction between the *clergy* and the *laity*, whereas if this sophism is exposed the whole system receives a death-blow and totters to its fall. We would not be understood by this as involving the clergy of the present day in the odium of devising and consciously upholding a system of sacerdotal dominion. Far from it. We believe them to be conscientious and well-intentioned men, aiming to do the will of God in sincerity, and we impute their error to too readily taking for granted the soundness of opinions and usages which have come down to them by inheritance, and which, from their being so seldom questioned, they have found little reason to doubt.

### § 18. *Prospective Anticipations.*

We cannot for ourselves but indulge the hope that the church will eventually develope an entirely new order of things in this respect, and that while every thing essential to the ministry will be retained, everything factitious will be discarded. How, otherwise, can any sign of promise be read in the church's future? As to an adequate supply of regularly and canonically ordained ministers for the various church societies spread over the length and breadth of the land, who shall receive their support from such societies, it surely is now and must be for a long time to come wholly out of the question. There is beginning to be an alarming deficit of clergymen—alarming, we mean, to all those who look upon the clergy, as we do not, as the very

bone and bulwark of the church. The prevailing spirit of worldliness, or the higher prizes of other walks of life, is continually thinning the ranks of the candidates for the ministry—which, however, had probably better be thin if such motives can make them so. Now for ourselves we do not regard this as in itself a circumstance to be deeply dreaded by the church, however it may be with others. It will throw her upon her own resources—upon her *lay* resources. She will be forced to wean herself from that dependence upon the ministry which has been so much the bane of Christendom. Although it is unquestionable that the man of the church is at this day to be built up mainly by reading, yet the inveterate prepossessions in regard to the *stated ministry* are continually tending to relax and paralyze individual action and to beget an unconscious reliance upon a substituted agency in matters of religion. The latent impression is almost inevitable, that as the minister or pastor is paid for his services, the entire conduct of the religious affairs of the society is devolved upon him, and that the duties of the rest are discharged by contributing their due proportion to his support, and sitting with exemplary regularity under his preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath. As a general fact men are about as willing to *pay* to be excused, as they are to *pray* to be excused, from the duties which make somewhat of a stringent demand upon the inner man.

The true policy is doubtless for every society to act for itself in the circumstances in which it is placed. Let each one resolve, in dependence on Divine aid, to be no longer embarrassed by that grand let and hindrance which is to be found in the exorbitant views entertained of the ministry as a kind of *sine qua non* as much to the being as the well-being of the church. Societies have, from traditional teachings, taken up the idea that a settled and salaried preacher is an indispensable element in every such body, and that there can be no such thing as a lay circum-

ference without a clerical centre. Now we do not hesitate to say that the sooner this idea is got rid of the better. If every truly good man is a church in the least form, any number of receivers associated according to the laws of the Lord's kingdom is no less a church in a larger form, and competent to the performance of all the appropriate uses of such a body. That it is possible in such circumstances for self-complacent and aspiring spirits, "loving to have the pre-eminence," to thrust themselves forward to the disparagement of worthier men, must indeed be admitted. But the true remedy for this is the cultivation of the true spirit of the church, which is a spirit of modesty, of self-distrust, of retiring humility, while at the same time it is a spirit that shrinks not from any plainly enjoined duty or service of use. Contingent evils ought not to be allowed to bear down and frustrate divinely instituted goods. "It is not always those," says the objector, "who think themselves qualified and who have a desire to preach, who *are* qualified. It is often not a spiritual love of use that prompts such desire, but sometimes a mere love of display, or a high opinion of one's own intelligence, or the desire of distinction which is at the bottom." Granted, but what then? Are there not those who *have* a true love of use, and who are *not* prompted by the corrupt motives here recited; and shall they be precluded from a sphere of useful action in the Lord's church, because others may prostitute that service to the ends of vain glory? Is it, moreover, just to insinuate of such men who are drawn to this province of action by interior promptings of pure character, that they are self-appointed if they enter upon it with the full concurrence of their brethren without passing through the prescribed church forms of clerical inauguration, which perhaps they could not do without compromising some of the clearest and most sacred convictions of their own minds?

§ 19. *The Clerical System especially out of place among the Congregationalists.*

It may be deduced from all that has been said, that if any ecclesiastical institution or arrangement separates, or has a tendency to separate, the body of believers into two distinct classes, and to assign to one class a privilege or character which the other may not claim, then is the design of the gospel not answered, nor are some of its most important truths practically recognized. To point out the many particulars, in which the separation of believers (if such they can be called) is effected in the Episcopal church, would be superfluous; for that church is avowedly governed by a priesthood, and “the clergy” and “the laity” are distinguished by the broadest possible line of demarcation. The whole prayer-book acknowledges the priest in all its ritual, by rubrics and sentiments borrowed from the papacy. Amongst the Congregationalists all this is softened and modified; and indeed, as to any acknowledged canon of church government, the priest has altogether disappeared from their churches; but still, as the ordained minister is a spiritual representative for the people in their order of worship, and sustains the whole part himself, and as the people are as inactive as if they existed not, we must confess, that according to those views which we have endeavored to set forth, he is to all substantial purposes their priest. The settled minister, on the Lord’s day—on that day alone on which all the brethren *can* meet together—is the sole person that visibly accomplishes the worship of God: no one but he speaks; no one but he prays; and this is invariably the case all the year round. If therefore all the brethren have indeed entered into the holiest of all, they none of them may open their mouths there; but have chosen one to do that for the whole church, which they dare not, or cannot, or will not, do

for themselves. If the Congregationalists sincerely wished to establish such a mode of proceeding in their churches, as we may gather from the Scriptures was the practice in the first æra, and of which the general bearing is evident enough, though some of the particulars may still be uncertain, they would forthwith allow at least a plurality of ministers, and indeed concede a liberty of ministry to all those who are "taught by the Lord;" and it would be open to all the brethren to impart according to their gift and light such exhortation, admonition, or doctrine, as they might judge to be for the edification to the church. But it is not so; and any expostulation with them regarding the existing state of things, is received as an act of hostility, and resented as a mischievous attempt to create disorder and confusion, and to introduce a controversy of discord in a quiet house. The truth, nevertheless, must be plainly stated, that the established order of worship in the prevailing churches is not scriptural; a plurality of ministers is not there tolerated; the brethren, who may have the gift, are neither desired nor allowed to address the church; the whole task of instruction is consigned to one individual, regularly educated and salaried for the work, and no attempt is made to encourage the expression of that spiritual erudition which assuredly is possessed by many a pious layman, who, through the instructions of divine grace, has hived up a store of profitable doctrine and wholesome experience, but which he carries with him to the grave, locked and sealed up in his own bosom, unknown and unappreciated by his brethren, because it has been the traditional etiquette of the sect, that the lips of one priest should "keep knowledge," and that "the people should seek the law at his mouth." The effect has been to reduce the priesthood of the whole body to a naked theory, and make that a mere idea abstracted from any thing practical or tangible, which was intended to be a governing principle of the church on earth.

When one person is exalted, it follows of necessity that others must be depressed ; and, as the exaltation of a minister is with reference to spiritual matters, it follows also that the depression of those around him is a spiritual depression. And thus it is in some dissenting churches at present. The people, who constitute the church, " look up to their pastor " with a spirit of obedience and expectancy, which, though, in particular cases, created by a defective system, it may be advantageous, is, on the whole injurious ; inasmuch as it abases the privileges of the church, and is little favorable to the full growth of believers set before them in the gospel, " the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," which should be the aim of all those who desire to be lively portions of the living temple.

§ 20. *Evil effects of the Distinction in question.*

The undoubted tendency of the actual arrangement, is to beget inactivity amongst the people when they feel that they have a spiritual delegate in whose hands are placed those large and responsible duties which are supposed to attach to the ministerial office. Many there are who can thus find a ready excuse for their own lack of zeal : they think their pastor carries the keys of the church, and to him, therefore, they consign their spiritual energies, as if he were a general proxy for all the people in their works of faith and labors of love. What multitudes of church members might be numbered who take no personal interest in the operations of the church ! How many are there who content themselves with the external acts of worship and a formal attendance on ordinances, leaving all the rest to the minister, or to any one that chooses to undertake that which they will not touch with one of their little fingers ! But with these notions there are other evils also ; for to this source may be



traced frequent discontent amongst the members, and bitter sorrow to many a worthy and laborious pastor. Great and numerous are the duties expected of a minister, and large are the ideas entertained of the limits of his office ; and yet, if he does not fill up the complement of all the impossible toil imposed upon him, he too often falls into discredit with his people, for not doing that which cannot be done.

The study and preparation expected for the pulpit ; the pastoral visits ; the attention to the particular spiritual cases of individuals ; the schools ; the prayer-meetings ; the church-meetings ; the public meetings, and all the rest of the complicated machinery of operative religion, impose a weight and multiplicity of cares on the shoulders of some pastors, which none but Atlantean shoulders could sustain ; and yet if the minister neglects any part of these enormous duties, which a mistaken theory has apportioned to him, he is in jeopardy of forfeiting the esteem of some of his flock, as he too often discovers, to his no small discomfort and sorrow. To use a curious expression of a deep thinker, " he is a system and not a man ;" circumstances have given him a character which rightly belongs to a society and not to an individual ; but neither he nor the church understands the difficulty of the case, the hidden cause of the difficulty, nor its only possible remedy. The theory of the parish priest perplexes the views and confuses the judgments both of pastor and people, and as each party argues on an erroneous axiom, it is no wonder that the deduction of each should be faulty. The people too often think their pastor careless and inattentive ; the pastor not unfrequently considers his people unjust and unreasonable.

## CHAPTER V.

## GENERAL RESULTS.

WE have now exhibited, in somewhat strong relief, the most important passages usually cited as affording a warrant for the institution of a priesthood or clergy, comprising an order of men distinct from the so-called laity. To our own mind the proof from the inspired Word is utterly wanting of the intended existence of any such class of men in the Christian church, and we do not therefore hesitate to consider the whole sacerdotal order, as at present established in Christendom, as a stupendous falsity, replete with tendencies of the most pernicious character to the interests of the Lord's kingdom. We are constrained by what we consider the strictest logical necessity, to deny the validity of the claims set up in behalf of a separate clerical caste, while, at the same time, we leave intact a leading or teaching function in the church, and one, too, that is to be exercised by the men of the church. There is a true ministry—not clergy—in the Lord's church on the earth, consisting of those who, in accordance with the representative character of the ancient Levites, are possessed of the endowments of spiritual love, enlightened intelligence, and active charity, which shall enable them to exercise a kindly pastoral office towards the lambs of the flock that naturally turn to their feeding hand. Every other form of priesthood we are forced to regard not only as an anti-christian usurpation, but as having the effect of an organic hypertrophy in the Lord's mystical body. By attracting to itself an overmeasure of vital influx, it will rob the other portions of the system of their due share of spiritual innervation, and a paralysis of the members will be very certain to ensue. How much of

enlightened discernment, indeed, is even now requisite in order to perceive that the broad line of distinction held to exist between clergy and laity, acts disastrously upon the interior life of the church by discharging the great mass of its members from that degree of responsibility which properly pertains to every one without exception? What is more evident than that the fact of having an individual salaried and set apart to preside over the spiritual interests of a society, operates as a release to the bulk of the members from any duty but that of punctually paying their subscription and sitting devoutly in their seats from Sabbath to Sabbath, receiving with quiet assent whatever is dealt out to them. The practical working of the system is precisely such as to confirm the drift of our theoretical objections. It goes all along on the assumption that the actual *work* essential to the building up of the church is to be performed, not by the body collectively, but by a particular class acting as proxies for the rest. If we make the analogy of the human body the criterion in this matter, it would be as if all the organs and viscera of the trunk should unite in feeling the brain to perform their functions for them, while they should enjoy an exemption from their appropriate work. Is it possible for any one who is accessible to truth to avoid seeing that this cannot be consistent with a true Divine order? That order is well expressed by the apostle of the Gentiles. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." This is the true model of a Christian church or society, and the ends of such an institution can never be fully realized till there be a return from the present to the primitive order.

The precepts and intimations of the apostolic epistles may serve at least as documentary evidence of a historical kind, of

the light in which this matter was viewed in the primitive church. "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; *but that the members should have the same care one for another.*" (1 Cor. xii. 24, 25.) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*" (Gal. vi. 1, 2.) Whoever was spiritual might feel this a command to him to exercise a kindly office of charity in restoring one who had unfortunately lapsed from his uprightness. Each was to bear the other's burdens. Again, "Now, we exhort you, *brethren*, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." (1 Thess. v. 14.) *Brethren* are here exhorted to warn, comfort, and support each other—a very principal feature of what is considered as the pastor's peculiar work. "Wherefore comfort yourselves, *and edify one another, even as also ye do.*" (*Id.* v. 11.) Passages of this nature might be largely multiplied, but it is unnecessary. The gifts and services of the brethren are not to be superseded, in a proper church arrangement, by those of the clerical rank. The feeblest brother has as deep an interest in the general spiritual life of the society as the strongest. It is in fact the duty of every Christian man to edify, warn, support, and comfort his brethren according to opportunities offered, and that upon the ground of a common concern in the spiritual well-being of the body.

The early Christians, or those of the first century, never for a moment supposed that there was any priest remaining in the true service and worship of God, excepting Him only who had "entered in once into the holy place and so had obtained eternal redemption for them." They never thought that the preachers and teachers of the gospel were priests; that they

were an evangelical tribe of Brahmins who had taken place of the Levites ; that of these new priests some were " Lords " over others, some " Arch Lords," some " Most Reverend," some " Right Reverend," some " Very Reverend ;" but all, from the greatest to the least, *Reverend* : they never imagined that the body of believers were to be divided into two classes, one called " the clergy," and the others " the laity ;" that the clergy were to be worshiped and paid by the laity ; were to be men of education and leisure ; a caste of separated Reverends, dressed in sable garments, and feeding the inferior " laity " with grace and pardon. This, we repeat, is no where intimated in the New Testament ; not a syllable can be extracted from the Scriptures to prove the doctrine of clergy and laity ; for the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles know only of teachers and preachers elected by the people, whilst all the Christian people, men and women, are reputed, in Holy Writ, the elect fraternity, the royal priesthood, crowned and anointed under Christ their common head.

Tradition, however, supplies the deficiency, and has taught us that the church very soon fell into oblivion of its privileges, and returned with avidity to those things which had been destroyed. In the second century, the elected teachers began to utter strange propositions of the priestly functions of the Gospel ministry, and in the third century, the pontifical heresy had made rapid advances to maturity.

It would be no difficult matter to suggest a variety of causes that were operative in working this departure from the standard of primitive simplicity and purity, but let it suffice to advert to one ; to wit, the tendency to *objectiveness*, which is inherent in the human mind : in other words, a craving for some visible object for the senses to settle on. If the glory of Christ, in his priestly office, is duly exhibited, it can be contemplated by faith alone ; for we can show believers neither priest, sacrifice, altar,

mercy-seat, sweet-smelling incense, nor temple of any sort. Hence our Lord pronounced a memorable blessing on those who should not be able to see, and yet should believe. This invisible glory is great beyond description, for its clearness, beauty, and consolation to those who have been taught the faith by the spirit of truth ; but, to carnal minds, it is an abstract intangible doctrine, without one drachm of satisfaction or semblance of reality ; it affords no sort of pleasure, comfort, or strength, to the soul of a mere nominal Christian, and is as little beloved by him as any of the dry propositions of Euclid. But a visible priesthood, with power and parade, officiating within the perimeter of holy rails, at altars of gold or marble, and mimicking mediation with divers well-contrived ceremonies and shows of intercession, is gross food for the natural man, and such as his coarse palate does exceedingly relish. The natural man has an appetite for quails ; manna is disgusting to him ; he is always lusting for flesh in the wilderness ; and hence priestcraft is amiable to all mankind, till its arts of rapacity and oppression render it an intolerable burden. Nothing but the Gospel, therefore, can save mankind from this all-devouring evil, which has as constant a tendency to return on society, as the sea to invade the banks of Holland ; and to bring back its tribe of monsters over the golden harvests of a blessed agriculture. Our Lord is exalted in heaven to rescue mankind from priests : all that came before him were thieves and robbers, and every priest that has followed after him, is, by his office, an enemy of the truth, and a soldier of the great army of Antichrist.

It is doubtless much more consonant to the dictates of the natural man to purchase exemption from self-denying duties at the price of one's annual subscription to the support of a substitute, than to go forward and discharge them in person, especially when their discharge implies, in order to the best effect, that a prevailingly spiritual state of mind shall be sedulously cul-

tivated. Accordingly nothing is more obvious than the air of easy unconcern with which the mass of Christians occupy their seats in the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and pass on through the week, devolving all care of the interests of the church on the spiritual stipendiary who takes them in trust. This is undoubtedly a necessary result of the system in vogue, and therefore we do not speak of it reproachfully in reference to any to whom our remarks may apply. They have been educated and have grown up under the system, and a thousand influences have been operating to prevent the suspicion of a wrong in it. They accordingly act as is most natural under the circumstances. While an external priesthood is recognized in the church, it will not do to have the office remain a sinecure. The people pay the priests for assuming the care of their souls, and why should they do themselves the work which they bargain with another to do in their stead? The fact is, the evil can never be reached but by striking at the fundamental falsity on which the whole rests, to wit, a distinct priestly or clerical order. This is an institute which, in its present form, is to be traced back proximately to the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church, of which the spirit of hierarchy is the animating soul. That the great reformer, Luther, had a very clear perception of this is evident from the following passage in his "Letter addressed to the Bohemian Brethren :

.... "Let that rock stand to you unshaken—that, in the New Testament, of priest externally anointed there is none, neither can be : but if there be any, they are masks and idols, because they have neither example nor prescription of this their vanity, nor any word in Gospels or Epistles of the Apostles ; but they have been erected and introduced by the mere invention of men, as Jeroboam did in Israel. For a priest, in the New Testament, is not made, but born ; not ordained, but raised up ; and he is born, not by the nativity of the flesh, but of spirit, that is, of water and the spirit in the laver of regen-

eration. And all Christians are altogether priests, and all priests are Christians; and let it be anathema to assert that there is any other priest than he who is a Christian; for it will be asserted without the word of God, on no authority but the sayings of men, or the antiquity of custom, or the multitude of those who think so. . . . Christ was neither shaven nor anointed with oil to be made a priest; wherefore neither is it enough for any follower of Christ to be anointed to become a priest, but he must have something far different; which when he shall have, he will have no need of oil and shaving. So that you may see that the bishops erred sacrilegiously whilst they make their ordinations so necessary that without these they deny that any one can become a priest, although he is most holy, as Christ himself; and again, that a priest may be made by them, although he be more wicked than Nero or Sardanapalus. By which what else do they than deny that Christ is a priest with his Christians? for whilst they discharge their abominable office, they make no one a priest unless he first deny that he is a priest, and so by that very circumstance, while they make a priest, they in truth remove him from the priesthood. . . . The ministry of the word is common to all Christians; that one passage (1 Pet. ii.) establishes it: 'Ye are a royal priesthood that ye may show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' I beseech you, who are they that are called out of darkness into his marvellous light? Are they only anointed and ordained priests? or are they not *all* Christians? But Peter not only gives them the liberty, but commands them to declare the praises of God, which certainly is nothing else than to preach the word of God. . . . As there is no other showing forth of the praises of God in the ministry of the Word than that common to all, so there is no other priesthood than a spiritual one, also common to all, which Peter hath here described. . . . Therefore it hath now been sufficiently confirmed most strongly and clearly, that the ministry of the Word is the chief office in the church, altogether unique, and yet *common to all Christians*, not only by the right but also of command; wherefore the priesthood also must needs be both excellent and common; so that against these divine lightnings of God's word of what avail are infinite fathers, innumerable councils, everlasting usages, and the multitude of the whole world?" Sec. App. A.



This is bravely said, though it has seldom found an echo in later days, nor are we by any means confident that the heroic Wirtemberger always speaks in his writings on this subject in the same strain. But that is immaterial. He saw then what we see now, that the priesthood of the Roman Church is the grand element of its power, and that its power in spiritual things is the breath of its nostrils. And though the institution exists in all Protestant Churches in a greatly modified and mitigated form, yet it is to this source that its origin is to be traced, and it is next to impossible to divest it altogether of its inherent tendencies towards the evils of hierarchy and the other forms of abuse to which we have adverted.

While frankly enouncing these sentiments we are perfectly aware of the light in which they will be viewed by the majority of the men of the church. They will look upon it as requiring nearly as much hardihood to deny a visible clergy in the church, as to deny the existence of the church itself. They will feel that a sad havoc is made of all their traditionary and cherished associations relative to the church, the ministry, the Sabbath, the worship of God, and indeed everything sacred; and they will be prompted to put the question, whether we really mean *quite* so much as our words would seem to import. Assuredly we do; and we will thank any man to designate the point at which we can *consistently* stop short of our present position provided our premises are sound. If there is no external priesthood known in the Lord's church, what authority is there for a clergy? We find it not, and therefore state our conclusions without reserve. No hesitation have we in saying that in the truest and purest state of the church on earth, no other than a spiritual priesthood or clergy will be known, and what that is has been sufficiently unfolded in our previous remarks. It is a priesthood and a clergy which exists in an utter non-recognition of the distinction between them and the laity. These classes,

as contra-distinguished from each other, are wholly unknown to a just ideal of the church.

That a multitude of questions should be started as to the sequences of such a theory as we have now announced we can readily anticipate. Who shall propagate the doctrines of the church? Who shall conduct worship, and how shall it be done? What will be the use of churches in such a state of things? Or, if we have them, what will be the use of a pulpit if there be no regularly inducted clergyman to fill it? That in all these respects the adoption of our views would work momentous changes in the existing order of things there is no shadow of doubt. But of sudden changes we are no advocates. We have too correct a conception of the genius of the Lord's church to think of urging abrupt and violent innovations for which the states of men are not prepared. We know very well that at the present moment they are *not* prepared to forego a system to which they have long been habituated, and therefore we do not urge it. We would have changes introduced neither farther nor faster than the firm and intelligent convictions of Christian men shall call for them. But we do not feel ourselves on this account precluded from broaching important principles. We hold that *it is never too early to give utterance to reformatory ideas*. Though not at once *acted upon*, they are still *acting* as a secret leaven in the minds of men, and in due time will bring forth their proper fruits. This position, we are persuaded, cannot be logically controverted, and yet the man who ventures to act upon it must make up his mind to do it at his peril. He will not henceforth be regarded as a perfectly sane or safe man. In his reputation he must calculate to pay the penalty always visited upon the disturbers of old notions. "The last offence," says a French author, "forgiven to men is the introduction of a new idea." We write under the full force of this conviction. The broaching of such ideas, however, though somewhat start-

ling at the outset, is less so upon reflection, and as they become familiarized to the thought, they assume new aspects, and gradually convert themselves to powerful elements of action. The Divine Providence has permitted and still tolerates a vicious order of things until his people, in the exercise of rationality and freedom, shall be prompted to institute a better. Meanwhile we should have for ourselves no scruples as to compliance with established forms of worship and instruction, so long as we were conscious of inwardly upholding no abstract principle at variance with truth. Ministering truth and good to our fellow-men is ever a laudable use, and a man in doing it is not called upon always to proclaim his conviction that there are things usually connected with the function involving grave errors and requiring radical reform.

Still, we should deem ourselves signally incompetent to the discussion of the present subject, were we not fully aware of the very great revolution which the realization of our views is calculated to produce in the conduct of spiritual affairs. It is impossible for us to be blind to the fact, that the practical doing away of the distinction between clergy and laity, would put entirely a new face on the services of the Sabbath, and present the whole matter of worship in a new light. And what then? What if the Sabbath gatherings of Christian people should partake more of a social character? What if the principle of mutual instruction and edification should replace the present mode, in which a single individual conducts the entire routine? Is not such a method of instruction more accordant with the spirit of the church than that of professional preaching? This form of teaching was more in place at former periods, prior to the invention of printing, when books were few and expensive, and the mass of people in Christian countries could neither read nor write. In such circumstances, when intelligence was limited, and the general habits of thought and speech not adapted to

sustain such a mode of voluntary mutual instruction, it would be more natural that one man should be employed to officiate in behalf of a whole assembly. And so long as that was the case, the clerical caste undoubtedly performed an important use. But in the progress of things, that state of the general Christian mind has been outgrown, and a good degree of general competency to declare truth prevails. Why then should not those who are "of age" have the privilege of doing their own religious business? We grant that such a mode of procedure would be *liable* to abuses, just as is every system of polity where the freedom of the individual is thoroughly secured. But if good is the predominant element in the men of the church, true wisdom will not be wanting, and wisdom dwells evermore with prudence. The truth, moreover, that is derived from good, is always of a prolific or self-multiplying character, so that the word will dwell richly in all utterance even in the humbler and weaker of the brethren, as they are often accounted. The tongue of the stammerer shall speak plain, and as there will be few too ignorant to teach, so there will be none too wise to learn.

How is it now? The trained and professional preacher, being supported for this very work, has time to devote himself to the careful preparation of his discourses, and he will be led, of course, to elaborate them in finished style, and by degrees to conform them to the most admired models of composition, and thus to serve up weekly to his audience an intellectual treat set off in all the graces of Tullian or Tertullian eloquence. The consequence is, that the mind of the hearer, being accustomed to this kind of pulpit entertainment, comes at length to nauseate the plain and homely style of extemporaneous talk among brethren. And yet who is not conscious that this kind of communication takes a deeper hold of the thoughts and affections, and exercises more efficient control over the inner man, than

the most studied oratorical displays to which one listens with mere passive acquiescence.

“The clear discourse, and cold as it is clear,  
Falls soporific on the listless ear.”

But a change in this respect, in the conduct of public worship, will draw after it a change in the external arrangements which the present method has called into requisition. Pulpit and priesthood are inseparable ideas; and pulpit and pews are related to each other just as are clergy and laity. It is vain to think of abolishing the distinction in the one case and retaining it in the other. The architectural structure of churches is but an ultimatum of the falsities which we have thus far endeavored to expose. The proverbial sanctity of the pulpit must fall before the correction of the errors in which it has originated. When the fancied “messenger of heaven and legate of the skies” has disappeared, why should not his consecrated standing-place vanish with him?

But in these circumstances, can the churches themselves, or the worship to which they are dedicated, be permanently retained? We doubt if they can, without undergoing the most signal alterations. The motive which prompts such alterations will be the enthronement of charity over faith alone, and charity can never breathe but in an atmosphere of use; and if use be the governing principle, it cannot but be a question whether the enormous sums expended upon church buildings, as also in the way of salaries to their official occupants, could not be expended to far greater advantage to the interests of the Lord's kingdom in multiplying the issues of the press, and in this way propagating the saving truth of heaven. Plain and moderate buildings, adapted rather to small than to large audiences, and made proportionally numerous, will answer all the demands of those who recognize the church as composed of “living stones” in-

stead of polished dead ones, and who would devote to beneficence what they can save from extravagance.

Whatever, then, goes to make the worship on earth most akin to the worship in heaven, ought to be the object aimed at by the Lord's people, in conducting their sabbath services. For ourselves, we are firmly in the opinion, that the plan of mutual instruction, on a perfectly voluntary basis, is far better adapted to accomplish this end than the present system, in which a single individual is *instar omnium*, or a kind of spiritual *fac-totum* to the congregation. How vastly more desirable that each member of a Christian society, according to his measure of gifts, should contribute his quota to the general fund of instruction and excitation in the spiritual life. Men learn more by the exercise of thought, and the putting forth of affection in the effort to edify others, than by listening to sermons when their faculties of use to others are in abeyance. It is, moreover, a positive disadvantage that men should have a hired functionary to do their thinking for them. The people actually need, for their own spiritual health, a great part of the intellectual exercise from which their ministers now relieve them. Adult Bible and doctrinal classes are now to a great extent conducted on this plan, and nothing is more evident than their tendency to develop among the mass of members all the capacities necessary to sustain the system. So would it be in the services of the Sabbath; and we think it unquestionable that each society of the church has a claim upon the powers and resources of all its members. The plea of incompetency will no doubt be urged in regard to multitudes in the church, but with the same propriety it might be urged that certain portions of the human body are incompetent to contribute anything towards the perfection of the whole. If there be any such part of the bodily structure, it is only fit to be sloughed off. But the fact is, the difficulty in the case supposed arises from the operation of a false standard in regard

to what is most useful in the way of social impartation. It is not the most finished and elaborate discourses which usually do the most good. They excite admiration, but they seldom move the inner springs of action. They play round the head, but they reach not the heart. The plain and even homely utterances of a good man, accompanied by the sphere which his goodness engenders, will commend themselves by a certain unction to every kindred mind, and the absence of literary or rhetorical qualities will not be felt.

Another fair and very important inference from our premises here urges itself upon us. How many infant and feeble societies in the church, are kept back and drag along a dying kind of life, from an impression of the almost indispensable necessity of a minister not only to their well-being but to their being at all. There is no occasion, indeed, to be surprised at this, for a clergy will be sure to teach, among its first and last lessons, the absolute necessity of its own order to the welfare of the church, and in this way to lay the spell of inertia upon the mass of the laity. How, then, can they find their hands when they have been so carefully hid away by their spiritual masters? The effect answers perfectly to the cause, and precludes the language of censure towards the private members, for they have merely practiced upon the copy that has been set them. Nor in fact can we properly adopt a tone of severe reproof towards the copy-masters themselves. They, too, have acted according to the light that was in them. They have not *intended* either error or evil; we therefore view the past with all allowance. But it is easy to perceive what the result has been, and continues to be. Dependence upon a superior divinely commissioned order of teachers and leaders, and the fear of trenching upon the sanctity of their prerogatives, has tended to paralyze exertion on the part of members, and to inure and reconcile them to a low state and a slow progress, in spiritual things. How is this condition to be

remedied? Not by a supposed adequate supply of ministerial laborers in the field, who shall receive a competent support from the flocks which they feed. For years and years to come this is utterly out of the question. There are scores of expectant clergymen among us at this moment who are ready to enter the vineyard, but who can find none who will pay them their wages. Except in a comparatively few localities in our country, a competent ministerial support is well nigh hopeless. This, for ourselves, we look upon as a pregnant commentary of the Divine Providence upon the truth of our main positions. It indicates to us that it is not by a clergy that the church is either to be sustained or propagated. It must be by every man of the church realizing himself to be a church and a clergy in the least form, and bound to act as if he were himself charged with the responsibility of the priesthood involved in his church character. All in a society or a neighborhood, who have the heavenly doctrines at heart, ought to feel it incumbent upon them, both jointly and severally, to see that their "coal be not quenched," and that their lamp go not out. They are each and all to supply the minister's lack of service, and every one who enters such a society should do it with a distinct understanding that such are the conditions of membership—that a church society is a spiritual firm in which there are no silent partners, but every one is to be an active working member, always carrying with him the conviction that the concern is complete in itself, that it must depend entirely upon its own efforts, and that its solvency and success can only be secured by every one, without exception, feeling as if the result depended wholly upon him.

So in the matter before us; we see no other method by which the little bands of believers scattered over the country can ever be prompted to arouse themselves from that torpid dead-and-alive condition into which they are so prone to fall, than by being weaned from reliance on the ministry, and thrown upon



their own resources ; and how can this be done without discarding *in toto* the very fundamental idea of a clergy or a priesthood *as a distinct order of men* ? A priestly principle there must ever be in the church, but that this principle must ultimate itself in a separate priestly caste under the Christian dispensation is, we are persuaded, one of the first-born of falsities which unfortunately has made itself to dominate over some of the chiefest truths of the church.

That the fruits of this system have not been all evil we of course admit, and we have expressly said that we have no " railing accusations " to bring against the parties who have, without consciously intending it, fastened a false and pernicious system of clerical order on the church. But we feel, at the same time, no restraint from pointing to the " mischiefs manifold " which refer themselves to this source. Among these we have barely adverted to one which demands a more definite presentation. We allude to the every where prevalent idea that the Lord's church is to be propagated mainly by the agency of preaching. This certainly cannot be if our previous position is sound, that the very office of the preacher, as ordinarily apprehended, is a fallacy. Let this position be tried upon its merits. " But how is the gospel of the kingdom to be proclaimed ? " it will be asked. We reply, by means of the press and the living voice, not of the minister or the missionary *as such*, but of the ordinary member *as such*. In the mode now specified, every society or circle of disciples is to regard itself as virtually a band of propagandists, whose main business it is, in this world, to live and labor for this end. To this every thing else is to be subordinate, without at the same time being neglected. Worldly resources are needed for spiritual uses, and when every thing is viewed in relation to eternal ends, we are doing our utmost to superinduce a church-state upon the world at large—the grand finale to which the Divine Providence is shaping its counsels. Nothing, indeed, is

more abhorrent to the true genius of the church than a spirit of indiscriminate proselytism ; but there is doubtless a growing receptivity in the world which prefers a claim to be provided for, and this claim will hardly fail to be met if the principles of church polity now advocated be thoroughly carried out. The fact is, the true church of the Lord is in its own nature self-propagating. It diffuses itself by outgrowth or offshoots, like trees and vines. There is a spontaneous multiplication of societies wherever a true spiritual vitality exists to give the start. There is in the essential life of a true church society a constant *conatus* to reproduce itself in similar forms, and if the converse of the apostle's aphorism, that "evil communications corrupt good manners," hold good, to wit, that "good communications purify bad manners," then we may reasonably hope that the quiet intercourse of the men of the church, with others, their blameless example, their solid, if not imposing intelligence, will be constantly operating, like a wholesome leaven in the general mass of mind till the whole is leavened. The upright walk, the sphere of charity, the unwearied study of use—all which will be sure to make themselves known and felt—will no doubt effect as much in the concentrating of attention upon the truths of the church as the discourses and appeals of a commissioned clergy, who will always have to contend, more or less, with the prejudice founded upon the fact that the preaching of the gospel is with them a paid calling instead of a gratuitous service.

But this noiseless and unobtrusive insemination of good and truth, within the range of each one's personal influence, is not the sole ground of reliance in the propagation of the doctrines and life of the church. The press is the great executive ministry of the present age. It is by its instrumentality that the furtherance of the Lord's kingdom on the earth is mainly to be effected. Here, then, is the channel through which church efforts are to be made to tell upon the progress of truth and

righteousness. The press we deem a vastly more efficient agency of the church than an ordained clergy; and could the large sums annually expended in paying salaries and building churches, be laid out in publishing and circulating useful works on religious subjects, we are satisfied that a far more substantive use would be accomplished for the cause of Zion. And let us here say, that while the employment of lay missionaries and colporteurs in great numbers and on a large scale may not be without its good results, yet, after all, this system of operation, is apt to serve as a virtual discharge of the mass of members from the duty of direct personal effort in this sphere. The proper state of things will not be reached till every one who prizes the spiritual treasures of the church shall feel himself constrained to become a missionary to his neighbor, without waiting to have the work done to his hands by a proxy. Why should not every churchman feel himself bound, according to his ability, to keep on hand a supply of appropriate writings with which to furnish, by sale or gift, those with whom he may regard as proper objects of such a favor? The apathy which has heretofore so widely prevailed on this score, is no doubt referable to the same general cause to which we have traced so many of the evils that have afflicted the church. The obligations of duty have been commuted on the principle of clerical substitution, and instead of being sacredly discharged have been secularly disbursed. We look, eventually, for an entirely different procedure in this respect. We can form no idea of a truly prosperous state of the church, but one in which the individual shall more and more assert himself—in which individual effort and action shall not be so perpetually merged in association. Still we would by no means forego this kind of combined ministration to the uses of the church. In the matter of printing and publishing they are of immense importance. But our ideal of a zealous Christian, is of one who is so intent upon minister-

ing to the spiritual weal of his fellow-creatures, that just in proportion to his worldly means, he will not only purchase and distribute the works of the church, but, if needs be, will actually, in particular cases, publish and distribute them at his own cost, where he is persuaded a great use will be thereby accomplished. At any rate, most cordially will he come forward to sustain the labors of those who, as a class, would fain dedicate their powers, by means of the pen, to the building up of the walls and temples of the "Jerusalem that is from above."

But we are admonished that we cannot indefinitely extend our thoughts even upon the momentous theme before us. We have uttered ourselves upon it with all frankness and freedom, and in full view of the consequences. We have been all along aware of the "revolt of mien," of the estrangement of confidence, of the alienated sympathy, which the declaration of such sentiments will not fail to encounter in the minds of many of our brethren. That they will at first strike their minds as the very extreme of destructive radicalism, is more than probable. Nevertheless, we have spoken advisedly; and however we may deprecate the sinister judgment and the sombre auguries of those whose good opinion we covet, we are prepared to encounter them, if fidelity to truth makes it inevitable. We have only to request, that whatever exceptions may be taken to the views propounded, they may be taken to the abstract argument itself, and not to the practical inferences which we may be supposed to draw from it. We can readily perceive how natural would be the conclusion, that if an external priesthood in the church be a falsity, it ought of course to be regarded as a nonentity, and that therefore the whole system should be abandoned instantaneously, as a crying abomination before heaven. We have already spoken in pre-arrest of any such sentence as this. We are no advocates of sudden changes in the fixed habits and usages of the Christian world. We would precipitate nothing before the fitting

time. The present order of things involves, indeed, a multitude of evils, but it has gradually supervened upon the order of heaven, and gradually must it be removed. On this ground we have no denunciations to utter against the general body of those who now sustain the sacred office, and of whom it cannot justly be doubted that they have entered it with the most upright intentions, and who continue to administer it according to the best light they have respecting its nature and ends.

But all this does not vacate the force of our reasoning. In respect to our main position—the utter repugnance of a priestly or clerical caste to the genius of the Christian dispensation—we are firm and immovable ; and fain would we have every member of the Lord's church appreciate fully his birthright, and act under the consciousness of the high things involved in his prerogative. Regarding it no more as an exclusive prerogative, confined to a certain privileged order, and fixing the thought, not upon the shadow but upon the substance, let every Christian realize, that whatever is embraced within the functions of the priestly and the royal office, pertains truly to him in and under the Lord ; and let him therefore walk feeling charged with the responsibility of this sacred character. Every one without exception is a king and a priest, so far as he is in the truth and good of the Lord's kingdom, and that, too, “unimpeached of usurpation, and to no man's wrong.” It is not alone in consecrated ranks that we are to look for the priests of the Lord's heritage. Wherever you find one that is meek, gentle, guileless, loving, truthful and wise—who is in the life of love—whose sphere is bland and attractive, because his spirit is deeply leavened with charity—whose speech is marked by a certain unction indicative of an inward fountain of delight—there is to you one whom you may safely acknowledge as a “priest of the Most High God.” It matters not that ordaining hands may not have been laid upon his head. It matters not that he may be unable

to bring due credentials of the fact of his falling into the line of the "apostolic succession." To you he is a priest, because it is in these very qualities that the priestly principle consists, and if you possess these qualities, you thereby become in like manner a priest to others. The unction of love is the only oil of consecration by which the true priests of the church are now to be inaugurated.

A similar vein of remark is applicable also to the kingship, the spiritual dignity founded upon Truth. The man most largely endowed with this principle, when derived from good, is clothed, from the necessity of the case, with a sort of royalty, which will be very certain to be felt and acknowledged by those who come in contact with his sphere. In this republican land, the name of king, as a civil ruler, is very offensive, and that too upon very good grounds. But the true interior quality denoted by the title, to wit, truth ruling, and involving the idea of ascendancy, predominance, weight, influence, moral control, characterize the man to whom the term is applicable. His judgment rules in counsels, and submission to it is easy and natural. There is nothing forced or galling, to a right mind, in the deference paid to truth, when assured that it *is* truth—truth flowing from a Divine source—for it seems identical with the light of our own intelligence which we cannot choose but obey; whereas, let any one endeavor to bear down heavily upon us by the simple dead weight of official standing, of power and authority, and we are soon goaded into indignant resistance. Such government is not royalty but despotism, and against this the free spirit of the Lord's people arrays and braces itself with instinctive promptitude. But the sceptre of genuine truth is a golden sceptre, *i. e.* having the element of good as its basis; and such a sceptre is wielded by every one of the spiritual kings in the Lord's church. To this species of royalty let every son of the kingdom aspire, and in him will be fulfilled the self-affirmed

but divinely authorized predication of the inspired Word, which is but an echo to the ~~language~~ of our text, "Thou hast made us unto our God *Kings* and *Priests*, and we shall reign upon the earth."

## APPENDIX.

---

LUTHER's Letter to the Bohemian brethren contains also the following passages, disclosing the same anti-clerical drift :

"A fine invention of the Papists truly, that a priest is invested with an indellible character, of which no fault can deprive him! The priest of the Gospel ought to be chosen, elected, by the votes of the people, and then confirmed by the bishop; that is to say, the first, the most venerable of the electors, places his hand on him that has been chosen. I should like to know whether Christ, the first priest of the New Testament, stood in need of all the mummeries of episcopal ordination? or whether his apostles and disciples thought these things requisite? *All Christians are priests; all may teach the word of God, administer baptism, consecrate bread and wine*, for Christ has said, 'Do ye this in memory of me.' All of us who are Christians have the power of the keys. Christ said to his apostles, who, after him, represented humanity entire, 'Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven.' But, to bind and loose, is nothing else than to preach and apply the Gospel. To loose, is to announce that God has remitted the faults of the sinner; to bind, is to announce that sins are retained. The names which priests ought to have, are 'Ministers, Deacons, Superintendents, Disposers.' If a minister is no longer faithful in his charge, he ought to be deposed. His brethren can excommunicate him, and place another minister in his place. *Preaching is the first office in the church.* Jesus Christ and Paul preached, but they did not baptize."

This is a blow at the root indeed. Luther here declares, that all believers are priests; that all may preach; and all administer the sacraments; and that preaching is the first office in the church! In another of his works he thus overthrows "the church," as it is generally understood by ignorant persons :

"They tell us that the Pope, the bishops, and priests, and all the population of the convents, form the spiritual or ecclesiastical estate; and that the princes, nobles, tradespeople, and peasants, form the secular estate, or are *the laity*. But all this is a fine fable: nevertheless, there is scarcely any one that does not believe it. *All Christians are of the spiritual estate*; the only difference amongst them is, that of the



functions which they exercise. We all of us have one baptism, and one faith only; and it is that which constitutes a spiritual man. The unction, the tonsure, the ordination, the consecration, which a bishop or Pope impart, *may make a hypocrite but never a spiritual man.* We are all of us consecrated priests by baptism, as says St. Peter, ‘Ye are all a royal priesthood :’ although it does not belong to all to exercise the same functions; for no one can assume that which is common to all, without the will of the community. But if this consecration of God was not upon us, the unction of the Pope could never make a priest . . . . If some pious laymen were to be cast away upon an island, and had not amongst them any one consecrated by a bishop, and were to agree to choose one amongst themselves, *that person would be as truly a priest as if he had been consecrated by all the bishops in the world.* It follows from this, that all laymen and priests, all princes and bishops, or, as is usually said, all the clergy and the laity, have nothing which distinguishes them except their functions. They are all of the same estate, although they have not all the same work to perform.”

From this passage we have only to strike out the word Pope to make every word applicable for the present hour. The popular language about “the clergy” and “the laity,” betrays the grossest ignorance of the first principles of the Gospel.

In the Diet of Worms, Aleander, the Nuncio of the Pope, enumerated, amongst the sins of Luther, the following: “He sins against the church, *for he pretends that all Christians are priests:*” and this was one of the heresies named in the bull which Pope Leo X. issued against Luther. The priesthood of believers is, therefore, peculiarly a doctrine of the Reformation.

In this connection we cannot well refrain from giving some additional extracts from another tract of Luther’s, addressed to his “Brethren of the Augustinian Convent of Wittenburg” upon their resolve to abolish Mass in their congregation. This tract was translated into English and published in London in 1842 under the title of “The Apostolic Succession a Satanic Invention.” From this we quote. It is written in the vehement, and somewhat virulent style of the great Reformer—a style which has been often complained of as harsh and offensive, but as to which it has been said in reply, “Whoever expected a lion to roar politely?” Luther certainly was the last man to adopt the language of the “rude mechanical” acting the part of the lion in the play in Shakspeare, and say, “I will roar you an ’twere any

nightingale;" for as he says of himself, having to deal with wolves, and hyenas, and bears, he did not see why he should not call them such. This, however, is not the feature in the paragraphs that follow, for which we would especially bespeak attention. We beg a careful pondering of the *argument*.

"I daily experience in myself how difficult it is to reclaim a conscience long vexed with impious custom to the sound knowledge of piety, and to cure its infirmity. With how many medicines, I beseech you, with what strong Balm of Gilead, with what powerful and evident scriptures have I scarce yet established my own conscience, that I should dare alone to contradict the Pope, and to believe him to be Antichrist, that the Bishops are his apostles, and the universities his brothels? How often hath my tremulous heart palpitated, and, condemning, objected their most strong and only argument, 'Are you alone wise?' 'Are so many all in error?' 'Have so many ages been ignorant?' 'What if you err, and should drag so many with you into error and eternal damnation?' And at length Christ hath confirmed me by his own sure and faithful words, so that my heart now neither trembles nor palpitates, but scorns these Papistical arguments, not otherwise than the most safe shore laughs at the threatening and swelling storms. Moved by this experience and reflection, I determined to send this letter to you to strengthen and console those who perchance, among you yet weak, cannot bear the force of the terrible adversary, and of a trembling conscience."

"Be assured, nor suffer yourself to be deceived by any persuasion whosoever would wish to be sincerely a Christian, that there is no priesthood in the New Testament, visible and eternal, except what has been set up by human lies, through the agency of Satan. But there is one only priesthood of Christ for us, whereby he offered himself for us and us all with himself. Of which Peter speaks, 1 Peter iii., 'Christ died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might present us unto God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened in the Spirit;' and Hebrews x., 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' This is a spiritual priesthood and common to all Christians. For we all who are Christians are priests by the same priesthood, by which Christ is, that is, we are the sons of Christ, the Chief Priest. Nor need we any other priest at all, or mediator, beside Christ. Since every priest is taken for this, on the testimony of the Apostle, Hebrews v., that he may pray for and teach the people. But every Christian prays by himself in Christ, having through Him, as he says Rom. v., access to God. As he promised, Isaiah lxxv., 'And it shall come to pass before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' So also they are taught for themselves of God, who promises, Isaiah liv., 'And I will give all thy children to be

taught of the Lord,' and Jeremiah xxxi. 'They shall not teach every one his brother, and every one his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least even unto the greatest.' And Isaiah xi. says, 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' Hence Christ, John vi., calls them 'Taught of God.' It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.'

"These testimonies plainly make void a visible priesthood, while they make both prayer and access to God and teaching common to all, which is certainly the peculiar of the priesthood. For what need is there of a priest when there is no need of a mediator and teacher. Shall we appoint a priest without the work of a priest? But mediator and teacher of Christians there is none beside Christ. But they of themselves have access, being taught of God, thence able to introduce and teach those who are not yet priests, that is, not yet Christians. And so the priesthood of the New Testament reigns altogether without respect of persons in all by the Spirit alone in common, as he says, Galatians iii., 'In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, there is neither master nor servant, but ye are all one in Christ.'"

"Come, then, you famous priests, produce us one jot or tittle from the whole gospels and the epistles of the apostles that you ought to be called priests above others, or that your order is a priesthood different from the common priesthood of Christians. But can you produce any such? Hear ye not, ye deaf images, go, I beseech you, to the Parisians, who for testimonies of Scripture will lay down their magisterial opinion: 'This proposition is heretical, and reproachful to the order of priesthood.' Then let this opinion be to you a principle of faith. Whence then have you those idols of priests? Why do you take away a name common to us, and arrogate it to yourselves? Are you not sacrilegious and blasphemous toward the whole church of God, who having taken away a sacred name, and one common to others, by violence abuse it only to tyranny and the pomp of your avarice and lust? I say again, Ye idols of the world, whence have ye you as priests? Produce a testimony in your favor, ye intolerable burdens of the world. Ye are not priests, and yet call yourselves priests; ye see what ye deserve, ye notorious spoilers and hypocrites.

"The testimony of Peter,' says one, 'is to be understood of a double priesthood; the one spiritual, by which all Christians are priests, the other visible, by which only the anointed and shaven, that is, consecrated priests, are so called. Wherefore that sacerdotal order of shaven and anointed has authority, as it were from Scripture.' Thus he writes, and, indeed, worthily.

"But, I ask, To whom does Peter speak in that place? Does he not address himself to all Christians, whilst he commands them to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby? Is

it not competent to all thus to grow? Then to be built on Christ for an holy priesthood, is not this suitable to all? But he distinguishes also, a holy priesthood from one not holy. But who knows not that the papistical priests are for the most part not holy? Since then no one can deny that the words of Peter are spoken to all Christians; and among these also is to be understood the priesthood of shaven and anointed, as that priest of the Lord contends on your behalf, it follows that all holy women and boys are shaven and anointed priests, since the words of Peter, being common to all, of whatever priesthood you understand them, will make the priesthood in like manner common. O worthy and happy patron of these shaven and anointed idols!"

"It is most horrible what I say. I wish it were false, but it is too true, for the sentence stands irrefragable, that visible priests and differing from the laity, in the New Testament there can be none; but that those who are so are without testimony of the Scriptures and the calling of God. This what else is it than that they are of the devil? For no one taketh to himself this honor but he who is called of God, as was Aaron, Hebrews v. What counsel therefore remains for priests of this kind, but that they be wise as soon as possible, and repent, abstain from masses, and again become laymen, or learn to celebrate masses by a legitimate use, that they may recover themselves from that whirlpool of divine wrath as quickly as possible. Let the insane sophists and Papists therefore now choose which they will, either let them show their priesthood out of the Scriptures, or let them confess that they are nothing else but masks of the devil and idols of perdition. For that which hath not its authority from the Scriptures is most plainly of the devil. For all the works of God are published in the Holy Scriptures, and those principally which regard piety towards Himself, which have been set down most faithfully therein, that there may be no excuse left for turning back.

"Let these things be sufficient for the first attack, and let us provide another equally strong, and proceed to adduce testimonies concerning the priesthood of the New Testament, and its office. Paul, Romans xii., 'I beseech you by the mercy of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Here no one can deny that he describes the sacerdotal office, which is to offer, or present a sacrifice and reasonable service, that is, not irrational animals, like the priests of the law, but to offer themselves. Wherefore this place makes priests. But it is said to all Christians in common, for all ought to present their bodies to God for an holy offering, and a reasonable sacrifice. Can you deny this, O miserable sect of the Pope? We have therefore in this place, on the authority of Paul, not only what is the priesthood, and who are the priests, of the New Testament, but also, what is their office and offering, namely, to mortify and offer themselves for an holy offering, by

which word the whole sacrifice of the law is mystically interpreted at once, for so also Christ, the Chief Priest, first offered himself, being made an example to all his sons, also priests, to follow his footsteps. The priesthood of the law, with all its service, being most perfectly fulfilled by this new priesthood and its service.

“To this agrees, 1 Peter ii., ‘And you as lively stones, are built up for an holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.’ Are not these things also said to all Christians in common? Are not all as living stones built upon Christ? And they are so built upon him as to be priests offering not corporal cattle, but themselves after the example of Christ, as spiritual sacrifices, whiles by the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the flesh, Romans viii. What will those most miserable idols say here? Does Peter make here a double sacrifice? As that mouth of lying hath feigned for him two kinds of priests. We are all commanded to offer these sacrifices whoever we be, wherefore that this priestly office is imposed on all, and that all are priests, is a thing most evident.”

“In the third place, we will attack this massing priesthood from the ministry of the word, for it is the part of the priesthood to teach; as he saith, Malachi ii., ‘The lips of the priest keep knowledge, and they will seek the law of God at his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.’ For so he ought to mediate between God and men, that he may offer to God for men, and may teach men from God, carrying of each to either. And here, indeed, the papistical priests seem to themselves to reign, because they suppose it to be their peculiar to teach as that huge trumpet, Pelagius, boasts in his decrees—‘Where there is a majority, there is the power of commanding. To the rest remains the necessity of obeying.’ To this they pervert that of Christ, ‘He who hears you hears me; he who despises you despises me.’

“Here see, as they have feigned to themselves a priesthood and sacrifice foreign to Christians, so also they have introduced a new ministry of the word, and a sacrilegious one. Which, that it may become manifest, we will first establish, by invincible Scriptures, that that legitimate and only ministry of the word is common to all Christians, as also the priesthood and sacrifice. For Paul says, 2 Cor. iii., ‘Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit.’ For he says this of all Christians, that he may make all ministers of the Spirit. But he is the minister of the Spirit who delivers the word of grace, as he is a minister of the letter who delivers the voice of the law. This was of Moses, that is of Christ. Likewise Peter says to all Christians, ‘That ye may show forth his praises, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.’ What Christian is not called out of darkness? But to such an one belongs the right and power, yea, the duty, of showing forth the praises of Him who called him.

“We grant that this must be so done that many may not speak to-

gether, although all have the same power of speaking. For Paul also was the chief speaker, Acts xvi., who while he spake, Barnabas was silent; but had not Barnabas therefore the right and necessity of speaking? All things, I say, ought, according to the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv., to be done decently and in order among us. But by this the equality of the ministry is not taken away, but confirmed; for an order of speaking is therefore necessary, because all have the power of speaking: for if only one had the power of speaking, what occasion were there to give command about order? But let us see that whole passage of the apostle which destroys the papistical lies about the right of teaching and the priority with most powerful thunders. He saith, therefore, 'If any speak with a tongue, let it be by two or at the most by three and that by course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be edified.' Thus far Paul.

"Ye idols of the Pope, I here adjure you, what can you mutter against these things? Paul says that all may prophesy, and by order, one after another, may speak; so that one sitting and hearing, if any thing be revealed to him, may rise, and the first speaker ought to give place to him, and be silent; then—that whoever they are that speak ought to speak under the judgment of the hearers, and be subject to their authority. Where now is your impudent mouth and the blasphemous boast of Pelagius, who hath cried with immense pride, 'Where the majority is, *there* is the authority of commanding. To the rest belongs the necessity of obeying?' Satan himself, forsooth, hath uttered this rabid voice by your mouth against Christ speaking in Paul. Christ subjects you and yours by divine authority to all, giving to all the power, both of speaking and judging. But you, by your own temerity, subject all men to yourself, and are elevated alone above all, like Lucifer, arrogating to yourself alone the right of speaking and judging. Therefore all Christians have the right and office of teaching, that Behemoth may be broken with all his scales."

"But they will here object Paul, who says, 1 Corinthians xiv., 'Let women keep silence in the church, for it is a shame for a woman to speak, for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be in subjection.' Wherefore the ministry of the word cannot be common to all Christians. I answer, it is permitted neither to mute, nor to those having any other impediment, to speak. For I believe that the right of speaking, though it be common to all, yet no one can or ought to exercise it but he who is qualified above the rest; and that the rest are bound to give place to such an one, that order and propriety may be preserved. For so he bids Timothy also—'Commit the word to those who shall be able to teach others likewise.' But there is required for speaking, be-

side the Spirit, a voice, also eloquence, memory, and other natural gifts, which he, who is without, duly entrusts his right to another.

“So Paul forbids women to speak, not simply, but in the church, namely, when there are men able to speak, lest propriety and order should be confounded, since a man is, in many respects, preferable to a woman for speaking, and it more becomes him. But neither did Paul forbid this of his own head, yea, he alleges the law, saying, that ‘women ought to be in subjection, as saith also the law.’ By which authority of the divine law he was assured that the Spirit would not contradict himself, and elevate women above the men now, who were before made subject by Him to their husbands; but rather that, mindful and tenacious of His own institution, when men were present, he would inspire men rather than women. Otherwise, how could Paul alone resist the Holy Spirit, who promised in Joel—‘And your daughters shall prophesy;’ and Acts xxi., ‘Philip had four daughters, virgins, who prophesied.’ And Miriam, sister of Moses, was a prophetess; and Huldah, a prophetess, advised that most holy king Josiah; and Deborah taught Barak as leader. Lastly, the whole church throughout the world celebrates the song of the blessed virgin. And himself, chapter xi., teaches that a woman ought to pray and prophesy with her head covered. Order, therefore, and propriety, requires that while men are present, women should keep silence in the church; but no men speaking, women must speak of necessity.

“We conclude, therefore, fortified by these most strong Scriptures, that there is only one ministry of the word in the church, and that common to all Christians, which all can execute and judge, and all are bound to hear. And since the Scripture is ignorant of any other ministry, we ask of these Papistical idols, whence they have their ministry which is incommunicable to all. Come forward, ye men of the Popedom, and show one jot of Scripture for your ministry. Will you bring forward that sacrilegious trumpet of Pelagius, ‘Where there is a majority, *there* is the authority of commanding?’ Consult the block-heads of Paris and Louvain. In the meantime, what shall we do? We have overthrown your ministry with its priesthood and sacrifice now a third time; and we pronounce, by the divine authority, confidently and with a free conscience—since ye reign without the divine testimony, that ye are the ministers of Satan, and that your ministry, with its priesthood, hath been introduced by Satan into the world to lay waste that salutary and only ministry of the Spirit. For therefore ye condemned also this article in John Huss, that it was not lawful to teach and hear Christ from any one, but that the world should be compelled to hear Satan alone from your impious and abandoned ministry. Hence it is that you teach nothing but what is worthy of that your ministry; you have extinguished and condemned the gospel; you teach your lies and those of Aristotle; and the Spirit of Satan reigns in all your books and your doctrines.”

“ But let us proceed and view the very chief ornaments and buttresses of this singular priesthood, namely, *the Bishops*, that equestrian and heroic kind of priests, which dares to call itself princes of the churches, in order that we may behold the whole body of this abomination. And here again let us hold fast, without wavering, for a foundation, that which we have now so often laid down, that whatever is done without the authority of Scripture, especially in things pertaining to God, has manifestly Satan for its author. For God hath sufficiently shown in Nadab and Abihu, while He would not have strange fire to be offered, how vehemently he detests, in things sacred, any thing to be done otherwise than is by himself determined. ‘I will be sanctified,’ says he, ‘in those who approach to me.’ How much more, think you, will his indignation be inflamed when not only beside, but also contrary to His commandment, any innovation is made in things sacred, and His institution made void; as when that impious Ahaz changes the brazen altar into a dial, and places an altar of Damascus in the temple of the Lord.

“ Such is what is done in those vain-glorious and mitred bishops, whom God is so far from acknowledging, that there can be no race of men in the world more adverse to the divine majesty. For they have not only been set up and reign without the commands of God, but in direct opposition to him, which I will show both evidently and invincibly to those who believe the Scriptures. For to those idols who deny the Scripture and only believe their own decrees, you can say nothing that will seem probable but lies, which they are continually turning in their hearts.

“ Paul says, Titus 1, ‘For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mightest set in order the things which remain, and appoint Presbyters in every city, as I commanded thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, for a bishop ought to be blameless, as the steward of God.’

“ Here, if you believe that the Spirit of Christ speaks and ordains in Paul, you must acknowledge it at the same time to be a divine appointment, that in every city there should be many bishops, or one at the least. For it is evident that he makes presbyters and bishops the same, by the same authority of God, when he says that presbyters are to be appointed in every city, who are blameless, because a bishop ought to be so. But he calls presbyters, not those shaven and anointed idols, but elders and married laymen of honest life and reputation in a city. These he would have made bishops, several in every city, as I have said, for in the Greek it is plain that many are to be appointed in every city, when he says, *Kata Polin Presbuterous*, ‘Presbyters according to a city,’ that is, wherever there is a city, that you there appoint presbyters. The same Paul, Philippians 1, ‘And Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons, grace to you,’ &c. Philippi



was a single city, and yet he salutes its many bishops. The same, Acts xx. He sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to him, who, when they had come, he said to them among many other things, 'Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, that you feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Behold Ephesus also is one city, and he calls the many presbyters or seniors in that church, bishops, who were appointed by the Holy Ghost.

"What can ye say against these three heavenly lightnings, ye smoky locusts of the bottomless pit? I beseech you by Christ, Christian reader, let not the mitres, hats, mules, families, jewels, gold, purple, of Cardinals, Bishops, Popes, move you, and all that most sumptuous pomp of impious men. Believe Paul, yea, the Holy Spirit; these are not bishops, but idols, masks, monsters, and prodigies of the wrath of God. You hear that bishops are here defined married men and upright, in one city, as many as are necessary to take care of the people of such city. This is not the definition of the church, nor of councils, nor of fathers, nor lastly of those most prostituted brothels of Paris and Louvain; but it is the definition of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, and of the divine Majesty, against which, if all the angels in heaven, with the whole creation should be wise, what, I beseech you, ought they to move you? Ought you not to esteem their words as the vain leaf of a tree in comparison of these words of the eternal Majesty? Now, since only foul apes oppose this, and mere masks of men, not less unlearned than impious, a most useless chaos of men indeed, scarce fit to bear these episcopal masks, why should you either fear or marvel at them, and not rather consider them as the stains and spots of the world, as Peter calls them, with all their pomps, statutes, lying and sacrilegious rites?

"Come, therefore, ye abominable monsters of the earth, and give us a reason whence, and by what authority ye are, and are called bishops. The Holy Spirit assigns many bishops to one city; ye are each bishops to many, and one Pope affects to be bishop to all the cities of the world. By what authority? Is it not of Satan himself, striving in you against the authority of the Holy Spirit? What have you to mutter here, ye impious and sacrilegious masks? We conclude therefore with confidence, that you, according to the divine Scriptures, and the decree of the Holy Spirit, neither are, nor are called bishops, but rather adversaries and destroyers both of bishops and of the divine decree concerning the appointment of bishops. But ye are bishops by the calling of Satan and appointment of his apostle the Pope; whence ye are rightly called creatures of the Pope, not of the Holy Spirit; for such as is the creator, such are the creatures. Do not your most hard necks yet tremble while ye hear that ye are bishops not only beside the will of God, but in most impious opposition to it? This is the reason that you do not even think of any office of a bishop, but are creatures of the belly only, fatted for the eternal judgment of

God. Therefore produce some testimony of your episcopate, which since ye cannot do, we by the authority of the Holy Spirit freely pronounce that ye are idols of the world, who, having violently seized on the title and name of bishops, and extinguished true episcopacy, are the last enemies of Christ, and of his church. So the Spirit in Paul appointing bishops compels us to judge and think of you, since nothing in the world is more dissimilar and repugnant to the state of bishops than your masked and more than worldly condition.

“But, lest Paul alone should thus seem to describe bishops, let us hear also Peter: he says, 1 Peter v., ‘The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of Christ, a partaker of his sufferings and future glory, feed the flock of Christ which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre’s sake, but of a ready mind: not as lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, that when the chief Shepherd shall have come, ye may receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away.’

“You see here, that the presbyters and overseers in each flock ought to be many, and the same in every way which Paul ordained, but what our translation has, ‘Not lording it over the clergy,’ was a mistake of the interpreter, which caused men to understand by ‘the clergy,’ in this place, those whom now an impious tradition has distinguished from the laity; while Peter here calls ‘cleros’ ‘the heritages, or substances,’ willing that the seniors of the church should be such as should know that they rule the flock of Christ, not their own inheritance. Then that they should not lord it over, but serve them, for servants are of another’s inheritance, that is of Christ’s, not lords of their own property. But now the Pope with his masks not only rules but tyrannizes over, exacts upon, rages against, the sheep of Christ, subjecting to himself both the property and bodies and souls of all, using them more rudely than any master does his own property. And this they call at this day to feed the sheep of Christ.”

“But they who by the introduction of sects have severed this simplicity into laymen and clergymen, into shaven and unshaven, afterward the shaven into monks and priests, then the monks into vestments and meats varied in infinite ways, and likewise the priests into different orders and governments—these are they who, through the instrumentality of Satan, have violated the church and scripture of God, and with serpentine craft have corrupted the senses of Christians from that simplicity which is in Christ, as the apostle says to the Corinthians. Therefore, bishops and presbyters have no name of sect but only of office. For, as a presbyter signifies an elder, so a bishop a visitor. From which impious and schismatical men have created states and dignities. For Paul indifferently calls them stewards, ministers of Christ, overseers. Let these things now be sufficient concerning their impious priesthood, sacrifice, and ministry. From which I suppose a

pious conscience will be sufficiently informed that, if he see himself not to be in the legitimate priesthood as soon as possible, and either take care to be initiated in the true ministry of bishop or deacon, or again to resume a life like laymen, accounting for dung that fictitious character, and oil, and shaven crown, and pharisaical vestment of those priests. For a priest of this kind is not a priest to God, but to Satan, therefore he hath not pledged himself to God, but to Satan, if he hath pledged himself at all, with whom no agreement can be kept without violating the agreement of the living God."

---

## SUPPLEMENTARY TESTIMONIES.

We append a few extracts from Gieseler, Neander, and Milton, and others, all which speak in the same strain on the general subject.

"The duty of teaching as an office was by no means incumbent on the Elders, although the apostle wishes they should be *didaktikoi*, *apt to teach*. (1 Tim. iii. 2 ; 2 Tim. ii. 24.) The capacity for instructing and edifying in the assemblies was rather considered as a *free gift of the Spirit*, which was manifested in many Christians, though in different modes. Still less was a distinct priestly order known at this time ; *for the whole society of Christians formed a royal priesthood, God's peculiar people.*"—Gieseler, Div. i. ch. ii. § 30.

"Any believer is competent to act as an ORDINARY MINISTER, according as convenience may require, supposing him to be endowed with the necessary gifts ; these gifts constituting his mission. Such were, before the law, the fathers or eldest sons of families, as Abel, Noah, Abraham &c. Jethro, Exod. xviii. 12, xix. 22, 'Let the priests also, which come near to Jehovah, sanctify themselves—' xxiv. 5, 'He sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah.' Such were, under the law, Aaron and his posterity, the whole tribe of Levi, and lastly the prophets. In like manner, any one appearing to be in other respects qualified, was allowed to teach openly in the synagogue, though he were neither priest nor Levite ; a permission which was granted to Christ, and subsequently to Paul at Antioch. Acts xiii. 15, 'After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.' How much more then must every believer endowed with similar gifts enjoy the

same liberty under the gospel? Accordingly, this liberty is expressly conceded: Mark ix. 38, 39, 'We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followed not us; but Jesus said, Forbid him not.' Acts viii. 4, 'They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.' xi. 19, &c., 'They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch . . . which spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus; and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord . . . they sent forth Barnabas . . . who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.' If our modern clergy, as they are called by way of distinction, who claim to themselves the exclusive right of preaching the gospel, had seen this grace imparted to those whom they are pleased to denominate the laity, it would have been to them a subject, not of rejoicing, but of censure and obloquy. xviii. 24, 25, 'A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus: this man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.' 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Exod. xix. 6, compared with Isa. lxi. 6, 'Ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God.' 1 Pet. ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Rev. i. 6, 'Who hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' Again, 1 Pet. v. 3, 'Neither as being lords over God's heritage.' If in this passage the word *heritage* (*clerus*, Lat. whence the term clergy, appropriated by the ecclesiastics to themselves), has any meaning at all, it must designate the whole body of the church. Nor is the name of the prophet applied exclusively to such as foretell future events, but to any one endowed with extraordinary piety and wisdom for the purposes of teaching. Thus it was said of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7, 'He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.' So also Miriam is called a prophetess, Exod. xv. 20, and Deborah, Judges iv. 4, and the same title is applied to believers in general, Psal. cv. 15, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.' Hence under the gospel likewise, the simple gift of teaching, especially of gospel teaching, is called *prophecy*. 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 'Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.' v. 3, 'He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification;' and so through the remainder of the chapter. 1 Cor. iii. 8, &c., 'He that planteth, and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according

to his own labor : for we are laborers together with God.' Pastors and teachers, therefore, are the gift of the same God who gave apostles and prophets, and not of any human institution whatever. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11, 'As every man hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God : if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.'

"If therefore it be competent to any believer whatever to preach the gospel, provided he be furnished with the requisite gifts, it is also competent to him to administer the rite of baptism ; inasmuch as the latter office is inferior to the former. John iv. 2, 'Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.' 1 Cor. i. 17, 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' Hence Ananias, who was only a disciple, baptized Paul. Acts ix. 10, 18 ; x. 48, 'He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord ;' which command was given to the companions of Peter, who are only called 'brethren,' v. 23, and 'they which believed,' v. 45. And if it be true that baptism has succeeded to the place of circumcision, and bears the analogy to it which is commonly supposed, why should not any Christian whatever (provided he be not a mere novice, and therefore otherwise incompetent), be qualified to administer baptism, in the same manner as any Jew was qualified to perform the rite of circumcision ?

"With regard to the Lord's Supper also, it has been shown in the preceding chapter that all are entitled to participate in that rite, but the privilege of dispensing the elements is confined to no particular man, or order of men. There can be still less shadow of reason for assigning to the ministers of the church the celebration of marriages or funerals, offices which hirelings are wont to assume to themselves exclusively, without even the feeble semblance of prescription derived from the Levitical law.

"The people of the universal church comprise *all nations* ; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, 'Go ye and teach all nations ;' whose conversion it is the duty of all men to promote to the utmost of their power. Rom. i. 14, 'I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians ; both to the wise, and to the unwise.'"—*Milton's Prose Works*, Vol. IV. p. 432.

"Heretofore in the first evangelical times (and it were happy for Christendom if it were so again), ministers of the gospel were by nothing else distinguished from other Christians but by their spiritual knowledge and sanctity of life."—*Considerations, &c.*, Vol. III. p. 40.

"This all Christians ought to know, that the title of clergy St. Peter gave to all God's people, till Pope Hyginus and the succeeding prelates took it from them, appropriating that name to themselves and their priests only, and condemning the rest of God's inheritance to an injurious and alienate condition of laity."—*Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty*. Vol. III. p. 493.

"Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw."

*Sonnet XVI. 13.*

"Of which hireling crew . . . . Christendom might soon rid herself and be happy, if Christians would but know their own dignity, their liberty, their adoption . . . . and let it not be wondered if I say their spiritual priesthood, whereby they have all equal access to any ministerial function, whenever called by their own abilities and the church, though they never came near the university."—*Considerations, &c., Prose Works, III. 40.*

---

ERRONEOUS LIGHT IN WHICH THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS ARE OFTEN VIEWED.—"Most persons inconsiderately regard the primitive Christians in the light of a mere worshiping assembly, like those religious associations of our own day who under various denominations meet together on Sunday, and after the services of the day, separate to meet no more until the next Sunday. In the interval, being essentially occupied with their temporal employments, they think little if any thing concerning church matters.

"But the condition of the primitive Christians was entirely different, they were not united on the principle of being a worshiping assembly, but on the Christian scheme of being an association of brothers and sisters who through the principle of their common faith were expressly commanded by Christ to love one another, and to do every thing in their power that would indicate that love by promoting every interest of the brotherhood whether temporal or spiritual. Hence their public worship was not the object of Christian association, but was merely contingent and accessory to it.

"The primitive Christians, therefore, as being a society of brothers and sisters, had a variety of duties to perform towards each other. They were bound to provide for their sick and necessitous members, and to visit and console them in any affliction, trouble, temptation, persecution, &c. They were equally concerned in the religious instruction of their brethren on all subjects pertaining to the common faith, and to remonstrate with those who might show a disposition to fall back again to the world. In short, as being brethren, the primitive Christians considered themselves under all those obligations that belong to an actual family of brothers and sisters who really love one another.

"The consequence of this social constitution was, that the action of the primitive Christians as comprehending various objects and purposes, required various persons to take charge of, or to take the lead in their several agencies according to their personal abilities or inclinations."—*McCulloh's Credibility of the Scriptures, Vol. II. p. 180-181.*

*“The first foundation for the constitution of Christian communities in the Apostolic age.*

“What Moses expressed as a wish,\* that the Spirit of God might rest upon all, and all might be prophets, is a prediction of that which was to be realized through Christ. By him was instituted a fellowship of divine life, which, proceeding from the equal and equally immediate revelation of all to the one God, as the divine source of life to all, removed those boundaries within which, at the Old Testament position, the development of the higher life was still confined; and hence the fellowship thus derived, essentially distinguishes itself from the constitution of all previously existing religious societies. There could be no longer a priestly or prophetic office, constituted to serve as a medium for the propagation and development of the kingdom of God, on which office the religious consciousness of the community was to be dependent. Such a guild of priests as existed in the previous systems of religion, empowered to guide other men, who remained, as it were, in a state of religious pupilage; having the *exclusive* care of providing for their religious wants, and serving as mediators, by whom all other men must first be placed in connection with God and divine things; such a priestly caste could find no place within Christianity. In removing out of the way that which separated men *from God*, in communicating to all the same fellowship *with God*, Christ also removed the barrier which had hitherto divided men *from one another*. Christ the Prophet and High Priest for entire humanity, was the end of the prophetic office and of the priesthood. There was now the same High Priest and Mediator for all, through whom all, become reconciled and united with God, are themselves made a priestly and spiritual race; one heavenly King, Guide and Teacher, through whom all are taught of God; one faith, one hope, one Spirit which should quicken all; one oracle in the hearts of all, the voice of the Spirit proceeding from the Father;—all were to be citizens of one heavenly kingdom, with whose heavenly powers, even while strangers in the world, they should be already furnished. When the Apostles applied the Old Testament idea of the priesthood to Christianity, this was done invariably for the simple purpose of showing that no such visible, particular priesthood could find place in the new community; that since free access to God and to heaven had been, once for all, open to believers by one High Priest, even Christ, they had, by virtue of their union to him, become themselves a spiritual people, consecrated to God; their calling being none other than to dedicate their entire life to God as a thank-offering for the grace of redemption, to publish abroad the power and grace of him who had called them out of the kingdom of darkness into his marvellous light, to make their life one continual priesthood, one spiritual worship springing from the temper of faith working by love, one

---

\* Numbers xi. 29.

continuous testimony for their Saviour (compare 1 Pet. ii. 9, Rom. xii. 1, and the spirit and whole train of thought running through the epistle to the Hebrews.) So, too, the advancement of God's kingdom in general and in particular, the diffusion of Christianity among the heathens and the good of each particular community, was now to be, not the duty of one select class of Christians alone, but the most immediate concern of each individual. Every one, from the position assigned him by the invisible Head of the church, should co-operate in promoting this object by the special gifts which God had bestowed on him--gifts grounded in *his peculiar nature*, but that nature renewed and ennobled by the Holy Spirit. There was no distinction here of spiritual and secular; but all, as Christians, should, in their inner life, in temper and disposition, be dead to the ungodlike, to the world, and in so far separate from the world--men animated by the Spirit of God and not by the spirit of the world. The individual predominant capabilities of Christians, sanctified, made godly by this Spirit and appropriated as organs for its activity, should be transformed to *charismata*, gifts of grace. It was thus, therefore, the Apostle Paul began his exposition of spiritual gifts, addressed to the Corinthian church (1 Cor. xii.), 'Once when ye were heathens, and suffered yourselves to be led blindfold by your priests to dumb idols, ye were as dead and dumb as they. Now that through Christ ye serve the living God, ye no longer have such guides, drawing you along blindfold by leading-strings. Ye have yourselves for a guide the Spirit of God that enlightens you. Ye no longer dumbly follow; He speaks out of you; there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.'

"The essence of the Christian community rested on this: that no one individual should be the chosen, pre-eminent organ of the Holy Spirit for the guidance of the whole; but all were to co-operate--each at his particular position, and with the gifts bestowed on him, one supplying what might be wanted by another--for the advancement of the Christian life and of the common end. In this view of it, the New Testament idea of the *charisma* becomes important; the charisma, by which is designated the individuality and diversity in the operations of the Spirit that quickens all, as contradistinguished from that which in all is the same; the *peculiar* kind and manner or form of the activity of that common principle, so far as it is conditioned by the peculiar natural characteristics of each individual. Just as the unity of that higher Spirit must reveal itself in the manifoldness of the *charismata*, so must all these peculiarities, quickened by the same Spirit, serve as organs, mutually helping each other for one common end, the edification of the church. We understand edification here, according to the general and original sense of the term in the writings of St. Paul, as referring to the advancement and development, from its common ground, of the entire life of the church-community. The edification of the church, in this sense, was the common work of all. Even edification by the



word was not assigned exclusively to one individual ; but every man who felt the inward call to it, might give utterance to the word in the assembled church. Referring to the same end, there were likewise different gifts, grounded in the diversity of peculiar natures, quickened by the Holy Spirit ; according as, for example, the productive, (prophecy,) or the receptive, (interpretation, the *diemeneia*,) or the critical faculty, (proving of spirits;) according as the capacity for feeling and intuition, or that of sober reflective thought predominated ; according as the Divine, in its overwhelming force, had the preponderance, and the Human, in its independent development, gave place to it ; or a harmonious co-operation of both the divine and the Human prevailed ; according as the momentaneous and sudden seizure of inspiration had the ascendancy, or what was contained in the Christian consciousness became unfolded through a process of thought quickened by the Holy Spirit (where again there were manifold gradations, from an ecstatic elevation of mind down to the uniform, discreet, and cautious unfolding of the understanding, speaking with tongues, prophecy, the ordinary gift of teaching), in fine, according as the prevailing tendency was to the theoretical or to the practical, (the *Gnosis* or the *Sophia* )”

“As the *inner* fellowship of divine life introduced by Christianity strove, however, from the beginning, to exhibit itself in an outward fellowship, it must necessarily appropriate to itself some determinate form, answering to its own essence, a form in which this union could appear and shape itself as a spiritual body ; because without such form no association, for whatever purpose, can have actual being and subsistence. To this end, a certain organization was necessary ; a certain relative superordination and subordination of the different members, according to the different positions assigned them in reference to the whole ; a certain guidance and direction of the common concerns, and therefore separation of organs destined for that particular end. And this stands in no manner of contradiction with what we asserted respecting the essential character of Christianity and the fellowship grounded therein, and respecting the mutual relations of Christians to each other. On the contrary, the natural relation of members to one another points already to such an organic form in the constitution of the community as a necessary thing. For, as there were individualities of character predominantly productive, and others of a more receptive bent ; as there were those pre-eminently calculated to guide and rule ; and, as the Christian life shaped itself after the form of these natural peculiarities, which it ennobled—the natural talent being elevated to a charisma—the result was, that some members of the community would come to be possessed of the gift which is designated in the epistles of St. Paul as the *charisma kuberneseos* (governments.) This mutual relation of gifts, grounded in the natural talents of individuals, pointed to a corresponding position of the several members of the community in their relation to one another. The *charisma kuberneseos*

required a corresponding office, the fitness for which had been conferred by that gift, in the organization of the church. This was a whole, composed of equal members, all the members being but organs of the community, as this was the body quickened by the Spirit of Christ. All these members, as organs of the whole and of the one Spirit which gave it life, were to co-operate, each in his appropriate place, for the common end; and some of the members acted in this organization of parts as the pre-eminently guiding ones. But it could hardly work itself out in a natural way from the essence of the Christian life and of Christian fellowship, that *this guidance should be placed in the hands of only one individual. The monarchical form of government was not suited to the Christian community of spirit.*

"Into the Greek words *kleros*, *klerikoi*, men had introduced, it is true, already in the time of Cyprian, the unevangelical sense of persons pre-eminently consecrated to God, like the Levites of the Old Testament, men employed on the affairs of religion to the exclusion of all earthly concerns, and who did not gain their living, like others, by worldly employments, but for the very reason that, for the good of others, they lived only in intercourse with God, were supported by the rest, just as the Levites, when the lands were apportioned, received no particular allotment, but were to have God alone for their inheritance, and to receive tithes from the rest for the administration of the public functions of religion, *oi eisin o kleros tou theou* or *on o kleros o theos esti*. See Deuteronom. c. 18. This notion of a peculiar people of God, (*a kleros tou theou*), applied distinctively to a particular order of men among the Christians, is now, we must admit, in this sense, something wholly foreign to the original Christian consciousness; for according to this, all Christians should be a people consecrated to God, *a kleros tou theou*, and all the employments of their earthly calling should in like manner be sanctified by the temper in which they are discharged. Their whole living and doing—pointed with one reference to Christ, the great High Priest of humanity, striking root in the consciousness of redemption, and bearing witness of its effects—should hence become a consecrated thank-offering, and a spiritual worship, (*a logike latreia*.) This was the original, evangelical idea. It may be questioned, however, whether that other notion, so much at variance with the primitive Christian idea, was from the first actually associated with the appellation *klerikoi* as applied to the clergy. If we trace along the history of its usage, it becomes much more probable, that this sense was brought into the world at some later period, when a change had taken place in the Christian mode of thinking, and the original sense was forgotten. The word *kleros* signified originally the place which had been allotted to each one in the community by God's providence. or the choice of the people directed by that providence; hence the church officers were particularly denominated *kleroi*, and the persons chosen to them *klerikoi*."—*Neander Ch. II. st. vol. i. p. 179–196. (Torry's Trans.)*

THE PRIMITIVE MODE OF CONDUCTING WORSHIP.—“In order therefore to make a full issue between the prevailing opinion on that subject and the one that I advocate, I shall now proceed to state the principle upon which I consider the congregations of Christians were organized in the days of the apostles, as far as we can discern the subject from the several books of the New Testament.

“The result of my investigation is as follows: *First*, when any number of Christian believers were sufficiently numerous in any locality to form a society or congregation, their theory of organization was either substantially like that of an ordinary prayer-meeting, such as is held by devout laymen among us at the present day; or *secondly*, when a body of converts to Christianity had been made by the preaching of an apostle, it would seem that he ordinarily at least, selected certain persons to watch over them and to instruct them, essentially in a manner analogous to what is done by the *class leaders* in the society of Methodists. In an ensuing age, after the decease of the apostles, the members of these several associations or congregations, however originally formed, henceforth selected their leaders by some formal expression of their own approbation.

“But that there may be no misapprehension as to the application of my arguments hereafter, I must first state what is to be understood by a prayer, or a class-meeting, as illustrating the views advanced above concerning the organization of the primitive church.

“The prayer-meeting that I recognize as an illustration, is the one where devout laymen, without any clergymen, meet together for purposes of mutual religious edification. They have no formal constitution nor by-laws, yet it will be found after the lapse of a few weeks that the association has acquired a consistency of form, and that certain individuals among them have become prominent in the association as those who commonly make the public prayer, read the Scripture, or exhort and instruct the members; as well as make any address to the association on any extrinsic subject interesting to them. These persons thus become leaders or officers in the society only through the tacit approbation of the other members, and not by any formal election. Their number is necessarily indefinite from the theory of their union, that pre-supposes that whenever any member is able to say any thing to the edification of his associates, he either will do so from the instigation of his own feelings, or else will be invited to do so by those who are aware of his ability. A society thus organized may continue to exist in a similar manner for centuries, as individuals will be found continually coming forward among the new members, to supply vacancies occurring among the leaders whether from death or from any other causes.

“If contributions in money are required from the members for the common expenses, such as rent for the room in which they meet, fire-wood, lamps, &c., the necessity is announced by one of the leaders, and

a collection made which is disbursed and accounted for by a statement made to the meeting, and so in like manner with any other matter that the association may please to approve of, whether of a religious or mere benevolent character. The reader can thus fully comprehend by this familiar illustration, that every particular involved in the well-being of such an association can be quietly disposed of among themselves without election of officers with defined powers, and without any formal constitution or laws. And such, I apprehend, was the original form of Christian societies among the Jewish converts, who being familiar with synagogue institutions met together as we have suggested above on the principle of a mere prayer-meeting. The leaders in such assemblies the primitive Christians designated according to their own idiom as being *zokonem*, elders, which meant nothing more than is signified by our terms directors, or superintendents. Those employed in more subordinate capacities they term *deacons*, *i. e.* servants, assistants, &c.

“If an individual was sufficiently wealthy and willing to provide a room, fuel, lights, &c., in his own house for the accommodation of his Christian brethren, they met there in the same manner as stated above, and this I presume explains the words occasionally used in the Epistles, such as Coloss. iv. 15, ‘Salute Nymphas and the church (congregation) that is in his house.’

“The various churches of the primitive Christians were thus organized, whether according to the principle of the prayer or class-meeting; and their respective leaders or elders from their mere position, exercised all those functions which are now restricted to the clergy, such as exhorting, preaching, praying, administering baptism, or in commemorating the Lord’s Supper. They had no exclusive authority to perform such functions, but just as it is in a prayer-meeting, where though any one of the association has a right either to exhort or pray in public, yet the majority never claim to exercise that right, but leave it to those who more commonly act in those capacities.

“At the same time that the *zokonem*, elders, or presbyters, thus performed those services which are now especially arrogated by the clergy to themselves, the more humble services necessary in the association were performed by those who, in the Greek language, were termed *deacons*, *i. e.* ministers or servants. The function of deacon in the first instance, under the influence of oriental customs, required two classes of persons, *viz. males* for services among men, *females* for those among the women. These whether as deacons or deaconesses, were to visit, comfort, instruct, or relieve the wants or afflictions of the several members whether as males or females, under the proprieties of eastern usages.

“That such simple forms of organization as the prayer or class-meetings were amply sufficient for Christian edification or instruction, may be distinctly inferred from the fact that the religious system promulgated in the New Testament requires no theological or speculative

teaching. There are no esoteric doctrines to be communicated to the people, and the simple requirements of the gospel as being perfectly intelligible to the plainest capacities, are there merely announced to mankind for moral or religious observance. It is our duty to carry them out into practice, and it is not our duty to speculate upon them as theological subtleties.

"I further remark, from what has been previously argued, that there is no authority whatever from the New Testament to regard the sacraments as means of grace, or that there is any direction given that requires them to be dispensed by a consecrated body of men. The pious leaders of a prayer or class-meeting are fully as holy in their lives and as competent therefore to their administration as any body of the clergy let their denomination be what it may.

"And finally I apprehend, as was the case among the Jews, so during the continuance of the Christian Dispensation, its divine founder expressly anticipated as a part of the system, that pious individuals, like the uninspired prophets of Old Testament times, would be always found among his followers, who by their various intellectual or spiritual gifts would be abundantly qualified to oppose error, maintain truth, and extend the light of the gospel throughout the world, under the sense of their personal responsibilities in such particulars.

"They were to teach, not with authority, but on the principle recognized in the Lancasterian schools; what one boy has learned he can teach another boy who is more ignorant."—*McCulloh's Credibility of the Scriptures*, Vol. II. p. 182-186.

LEARNING IN THE MINISTRY.—"Learning has ever been considered a proper appendage of a priesthood. Nearly all sects unite in the opinion, that a learned ministry is indispensable in the service of the Lord's church. But the universality of an opinion ought not to add to its authority with an inquiring mind; or, rather, it ought to make the inquirer suspect, that it may possibly be a universal delusion, fit only to be classed with the exploded prejudice, that 'the earth is the centre of the universe,' or that 'nature abhors a vacuum.'"

"The necessity of a 'learned ministry' is, perhaps, more popular, and more approaching to universal than any other opinion; for it has not, like some others, to struggle with party opposition, and may be entertained by all sects without offending any. I, nevertheless, suspect that it is to be classed amongst the untenable errors of the Christian commonwealth, and that its wisdom is based on the rudiments of this world, and on that philosophy which there is an express command to avoid.

"It is incumbent on us to remember, and we never can be too deeply impressed with this important truth, *that the church of Christ is not like other bodies*: it is not a sanhedrim of argute and subtle rabbis, nor a senate of a learned university; nor a parliament of literati, con-

voked for the purpose of unveiling the face of the universal Isis, and of displaying all the close secrets of the mighty mother, by a strict analysis of her perplexing phenomena ; but it is a body of illuminated and regenerated saints, who once were darkness but are now light, and who profess to have received a spiritual knowledge by the immediate teaching of God, concerning mysteries, which the rest of the world neither accepts, nor admires, nor understands.

“We may state in this connection two very important truths. 1st. That the first preaching of the gospel was not by a learned ministry. 2d. That multitudes, even in this generation, have been converted through the ministry of those who had not the slightest pretensions to learning.

“The first of these propositions is more than one argument ; it is almost all that is to be proved. I must, therefore, make sure footing here, and repeat, that the ministry of the apostolical times was *not* a learned ministry ; from which it will follow, that learning in Christian teachers is something more than was required in the apostolical days ; and that unless the need of it is so great, by some extraordinary change of circumstances, as to reduce the church to extremities if she be any longer deprived of its assistance, it is as little to be desired as a prelate’s diocesan mitre, or any other figment of man. But there is nothing in the New Testament intimating that, at some future day, it would be requisite to make preachers of the gospel learned men ; nothing which can be forced into such a *prophecy* ; for prophecy it must be, seeing that nothing of the sort was known in the apostolical age.”—*Beverley’s Heresy of a Human Priesthood*, p. 38-44.

---

## LIST OF AUTHORITIES.

It may possibly be conferring a favor upon a portion of our readers, to indicate some of the leading treatises on the general subject discussed in the preceding pages. In doing this we are not exact as to the order of time or the precise wording of titles :

TYNDALL’S Rights of the Christian Church Asserted.

BARCLAY’S Apology for the Quakers.

NEANDER’S Church History, Vol. I.

MOSHEIM’S Commentaries on the Affairs of Christianity before Constantine.

COLEMAN’S Apostolical and Primitive Christian Church.

MCCULLOH’S Credibility of the Scriptures, 2 vols. (A work which does perhaps more thorough justice to the subject than any we could name.)

BEVERLEY’S Heresy of a Human Priesthood.

“ Inquiry into the Scriptural Doctrine of the Christian Ministry.

(Both very able.)

BUSH’S Miscellanies.

MILTON’S Prose Works, Vol. IV. (Bohn’s Edition.)

CONDER’S Protestant Nonconformity, 2 vols.













